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✧ Zaphnath-Paaneah ✧

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A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS.

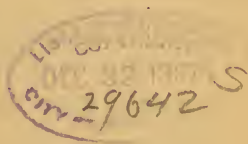


By C. L. Phifer



Zaphnath-Paaneah

A PLAY IN FIVE ACTS



Charles BY
C. L. PHIFER

AUTHOR'S PRIVATE EDITION

CALIFORNIA, MO., 1887

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P 323

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ZAPHNATH-PAANEAH (the man to whom God hath revealed secrets), son of Israel and Rachel; same as Joseph.

ISRAEL, (prevailer), same as Jacob.

REUBEN, }
SIMEON, } Israel's sons by Leah. (The
LEVI, } children of Israel are named
JUDAH, } here in order of precedence.)

DAN, }
NAPHTALI, } Israel's sons by Rachel's hand-
maid, Bilhah.

GAD, }
ASHER, } Israel's sons by Zilpah, Leah's
handmaid.

ISSACHAR, }
ZEBULUN, } Israel's sons by Leah.

Joseph—BENJAMIN, Israel's sons by Rachel.

PHARAOH, Ruler of Egypt.

POTAPHAR, In command of Pharaoh's army.

POTI-PHERAH, Priest at On.

IIARAN, An Ishmælitish merchant.

LEAH, }
RACHEL, } Wives to Israel.

DINAH, Daughter of Israel and Leah. Her husband, Shechem, had been killed by Simeon and Levi.

ZELEIKA, Wife of Potaphar. The name is from the Koran, and as it seems Greek, I have supposed her to be a Grecian.

ASENATH, Daughter of Poti-pherah, cousin of Potiphar, and wife to Zaphnath-Paaneah.

Baker to Pharaoh. Butler to Pharaoh. Keeper of prison. Manassah and Ephraim, Joseph's sons. Bilhah and Zilpah. Lords and Ladies. Senators. Astrologers. Servants. Throngs of Citizens. Chorus as Famine. Etc.

SCENE--Ancient Egypt and Caanan.

ZAPHNATH-PAANEAH.

PROLOGUE.

Interior of Museum in Bulaq, Egypt. Various catafalques and sphynxes, and mummies of Setis, Sesosthis, Nefer-ari et. al. are exposed. The khedive and retenue pass and exit, followed by men from various nations in varied costumes. Then, enter American and English consuls, and Maspero, the archaeologist, who stop at the casket of Sesosthis.

E. C.—Poh! smell the ancient, musty ceremonies.

A. C.—I smelled them at a funeral in Boston: They smell like beans.

MAS. Setis is this; this is Sesosthis, As the Greeks call him, else Rameses the great. For money was his alabaster tomb Well hidden, broke, and sacred relics sold; Their robes and treasures and their winding-sheets,

The hand of one old king, another's head: And when we found the king's sarcophagus, The Arabs sat about like vultures, keen To pounce upon the dead and glut themselves: I speak in figures; not as canabals, But to stip off the bones of kings for backshesh.

A. C.—They say of us Americans, we do All things for money; so did they, it seems. But which is worse, to sell old kings for bread, Or stick them up to show to everyone At such a price? Were I the king in question (But thank the Lord, I'm plain American) I'd choose the former. O you shrewd Maspero, A little variance makes a mighty virtue: But you must paint more bold to make us stare.

MAS.—I will example you, merry republican. To honor men we strip them, make them stone, Label them and stand them in the weather. All further answer let great Stanley make, For this is science, science rules to-day. So goes this world; so nations rise and fall And are forgotten, till men would dispute (As they do Bethle'm's star) if such had been, But for these relics. When this god-king died, The frightened subjects tore their hair and wept,

Never so troubled save when died their bull, For this king was a god who worshipped self. They to the sacred stream threw offerings As passed the royal barque with mighty dead Down to the secret palace windowless Where dwelt his fathers and where he should dwell

Unseen of eyes forever, in a land Under the ground no living man could find.

Yet he is found, Osiris is no more, The curious look at him, and Israel's God, Ignored by him, is mightiest of earth.

A. C.—Suppose you this Sesosthis, living, dreamed

Of pale-face men from nations then unborn, And of a world unheard-of in his day, Looking upon his corse, three thousand years After he died, and seeing how he looked? Suppose you it e'er entered on his thought The stars and stripes and Andrew's cross would come

And have ambassadors where he had reigned?

E. C.—Those were thoughts royal e'en for royalty.

Yet why be hidden, save through fear that we North races might secure his royal dust And "stop a chink to keep the cold away?"

MAS.—We do not dream of thirty centuries And nations yet unborn to rule the world And have their navies mistresses of seas When Uncle Sam and John Bull are no more; Nor we assume they ever will decay, St. Paul's be ruined, Windsor lie in heaps, Bartholdi's "Liberty" a fallen bronze, And all but rubbish where degenerate Poor creatures creep and quavering ask backshesh.

E. C.—Yet England has some ruins that are ruins.

A. C.—Except for mounds, totems, edge tool and beads

Of a race so old as to be forgotten, America is bright as a new pin. Old man, your bald head and your yellowed beard

Are gazed on by a race remote from you: Your heavy chin calls you a tyrant, sir; 'Tis due the Israelites to tell you so. Now will you have me strangled? Your strangling days

Are past. Poor man! I wish him well. He has A cross loud-painted on his breast—a cross—See, on his breast—as talisman; the sign By which we hope to conquer death, and I Would dread to think e'en he were burning now.

I would all tyrants could gaze at him so, His neck all shriveled to his vertebra, And his most royal body left exposed To vulgar gaze of curious.

MAS. We all May learn the futility of war and pomp From seeing the great kings at Westminster Trodden upon, or these tombs, buildings which

Werë lifetime work, riled of emperors
And princesses, so they may naked lie
Before all Britians, all Americans;
These dainty princesses who walked on hearts
Showing their charms promiscuous, milky
breasts

Shriveled to dry skins. Beauty, honor, fame,
These but perpetuate deformity,
While want, that slept in life, sleeps well in
death.

A. C.—I would I could awaken from their
sleep

These more than seven sleepers in this cave,
And bid the old life on before my eyes.

MAS.—Karnac renewed! Balbec restored
again!

The sphynx the excavators have unearthed
From the deep sands of thirty centuries
Crowded about with votaries!

A. C. Behold
The Israelites brick-making without straw
At this man's royal word, worn out of life
So he could build his grave-house! Moses'
work

Before the masters of the Black Art, when
The snaky rod of Aaron's stretched its mouth
For forty feet, as if to gulp the palace!

E. C.—I have a thought—We'll wake old
Karnac up.

I have an actor friend, St. Clair by name—
You know him by repute,—but lately wed
To a tragedienna, Mlle. Zayn,
A lovely star of the first magnitude.
They drink their honeymoon on old Olympus,
Fresh from the hand of sunny Ganamede,
And in that gladiatorial theatre,
The Collesium, with their companies,
Dream for a holiday, or marvel o'er
The tragic tableaux of old Pompeii.
They also come to see our monoliths,
And spend some days afloat upon the Nile,
Seeking the romance Avon's bard enwreaths
Around the dusky Egypt's incense ship.
Here is my scheme (the khedive will approve):
We'll fit out Karnac as a theatre,
And have the actors "put upon the boards"
(To use a phrase) what once was acted there.

A. C.—The idea shines. Have a Havana,
sir,

As a reward for brilliancy. Maspero,
If the incense of contemplation will
Offend not this god-king here, smoke with me.
"No smoking here"—an omnipresent sign.
I bet I'll see that when I get to heaven.
Well, pocket snipes; we'll take them on the
wing.

Contains their repertoire a play like that?

E. C.—There is an old play, and I've seen
them play it,

Wherein there are some fairly pretty scenes.

MAS.—But does Sesostri figure in that play?

E. C.—The play is called Zaphnath-Paaneah.

A. C.—Was this Jack-pot-Pay-and-me-you
a Russian, sire?

The name's familiar, sure.

E. C. The story is
The Bible tale of Joseph, varied some.

MAS.—He was before Rameses II, he
Who now is gossipped of.

A. C. Near Cheops, eh?
I have n't been to Sunday school for years.

MAS.—After Cheops; after Thermisgitis,
That thrice-grand—Mason, and astrologer.

A. C.—That fellow Joseph brought his
brethren down

For this man here to tyrannize, I think,
Thus getting even for their selling him.
Zounds! it is fine to see that acted here.
As though the ages past had come to life
And Egypt's dead were walking Egypt's soil.
Imagine it! [Exeunt and curtain.]

ACT I.

SCENE I.—Plain near Dothan. Enter Simeon and Levi.

REU.—But, Simeon, art thou sure
Of what thou sayest?

SIM. I tell thee, Reuben,
This stripling dreameth of pre-eminence,
And would thy birthright filch.

REU. It must be so;
And were I sure, I'd teach him how to steal.

SIM.—'Tis naught to me, for have thou the
birthright

Or have this Joseph it, I keep my place,
And yet, seeing thee robbed I have cried out.
Were I thee I would nip the treason now,
But till thou give the word we cannot move
To save, without like treason on our parts.
There is a way— [Enter Judah and brethren.]
Did either of you hear our brother's dream
About the sun, moon and eleven stars
Doing him honor of a potentate?
Reuben doth doubt.

REU. O Simeon, I do not.

SIM.—Well, Judah, of the dream.

JUD. He had two dreams:
One was that we were each one binding sheaves
When all our bundles bowed unto his sheaf;
The other that the sun, moon and eleven stars
Did him obsequence.

REU. A grievous fault,
And I am grieved to see my brother sin
And not be grieved.

REU. What mean the dreams?

JUD.—Canst thou not see when it is plain
as day,

Or art thou like an owl? but if thou wast,
Seeing at night thou shouldst see in dark
sayings.

Our sheaves acknowledged this child for their
lord;

And for the next dream, Israel is the sun,
The moon is Rachel, the ten stars are we,
The sons of Israel and Leah and
Of Rachel's handmaid (for so would this snip

Clad royally, push brothers from the nest,
As well as the near brood that fed with him);
The other star is Leah: she a star,
And Rachel as a moon by Israel.

SIM.—Now, Reuben, what think'st thou?

REU. He ought to die.

I have been thinking what a handy thing
Our hand is: we can do all with hands;
We bend them to the instrument we wish
And with a little change make many tools:
And twenty hands had ought to outgrip two.
Not but I think he ought to die: but I,
Having advantage of nine loyal brothers,
As heir, next Israel, to rulership, should not
Judge heatedly; it is not like a king.
So, ere I sentence pass, what do you think?

LE.—There's justice for you! there's a king
indeed!

I have in mind, how great a thing is mind—
If it is used. But since we'll try him fair,
He ought to die, because we think he ought.

GAD.—If one unmarried, and a servant's
son

Not yet arrived at manhood and at wisdom,
May speak herein, I'd say he ought to die.

REU.—Let all speak freely.

ASH. I would deserve death,
If I, being youngest, plotted to be highest,
As Joseph doth.

DAN. A young man like myself,
And Naphtali, being sons of Rachel's maid,
Should hardly speak before our elder brothers,
Save to drive off the wolf of natural fear
From the true lamp of our gentle thoughts
Toward you; for we are Joseph's brethren
After kin only and not after spirit.
At Bethel, as Gad and Ashur know,
And Zebulun, we all rebuked his dreams,
And like a girl the lad told father of it.

REU.—This knowledge of your loyalty doth
cheer.

JUD.—As thou wouldst try him, let us see
his aim.

And not be talking what we think of him.
Abram had two sons, and the youngest one,
Isaac, inherited the first-born's right;
Isaac had two sons—Jacob, youngest-born,
Feigning the hairy Esau, took his right;
Now, Joseph, youngest-born, of homage dreams
And wears the royal coat of many colors.

REU.—Kings make that death: if one put
on a coat

The king hath worn, 'tis death; if one should
dream

He were the king, though he did sleep, he dies.
Did judgment not hang on my head as eldest,
I'd have his blood: but no, I must be calm.

SIM.—Why all this talk to hide apparent
crime?

The case is clear, the punishment is death.
Kings must have order, or their kingdoms fall,
Families their precedence and rules, or fail,
And by all law and usage he should die,
Because he doth rebel at precedence,
And strikes at order, which is mutual safety.

Our safety makes demand that he should die.

REU.—Thou sayest well: he ought to die.

SIM.—And having Reuben's word, that is
our right;

He that first sees the lad, if he is loyal,
Let him destroy one traitor.

[Exit. Gad, Ash., Iss., Naph. and Zeb.]

Where go they?

DAN.—That dreamer cometh.

SIM.

Where?

DAN.—There, on the rise of yon declivity.

[Exit. Sim., Levi, Judah.]

Stay, Reuben.

REU.—Bring here the lad, alive. What
wilt thou, Dan?

DAN.—O Reuben, but remember Cain and
Abel.

Joseph thy brother is. Wouldst stain thy soul
With crime to foul, the smell would fill the
heaven.

And turn God's face from thee, till, void of
light,

Thou creep in shame and misery to hell,

While bloody demons calk above thy head?

REU.—So find I thee! thou art a traitor, too.

DAN.—O Reuben, leave their counsels ere
too late;

Omit the sin which cannot be undone.

REU.—I do not sin; 'tis thou and Joseph
sin.

DAN.—Is Simeon not next thee, Levi, third?
And thou being dead, who then would have
the birthright?

Levi and Simeon are bloody men;

Already is your sister widowed by them;

And if thou give consent for Joseph's death,
Then they may slay thee, saying thou didst
teach them

To slay for birthright's sake.

REU. I thought not; it is true.

Not one hair of the lad shall fall, my brother,
And for those plotters—

DAN. No word of this. I'll to the sheep.

Exit. Dan. Re-enter Sim., Levi, Judah and Gad
with Joseph, cuffing him and stripping him
of his coat.]

REU.—And ye unmarried children, to the
sheep. [Waving others back.]

LEVI.—Go, bring our sheaves, that they may
prostrate fall,

Doing him honors of a potentate.

SIM.—And let the sun and stars come out
of heaven

To do obedience to our little king.

JOS.—I do n't know what you mean, to treat
me so,

And snap upon my coming like as wolves.

SIM.—Brat! call us wolves? [Striking him.]

JOS.—I called you not wolves, but ye act as
wolves,

To pounce upon me so. What have I done?

I brought you victual, and at Shechem was

Directed here, and hitherward I came,

And for my victual you requite me so.

SIM.—Thou wouldst we'd give thee manners due a king.

Jos.—I would you'd give me manners due a brother.

Brothers are from one fount, and rise equally.

SIM.—They do? Hear, Reuben.

[Draws a dagger.]

REU. Stop, Simeon!

We'll have no crime. Stop, plotter, stay!

Help, Judah! Gad!

JUD. Obey! back, I say!

Now, Reuben, take the child and do thy will.

[Exit, Reuben, with Joseph. Levi follows.]

Brothers, you had forgot Reuben is eldest.

SIM.—The changeling! Joseph's more fit to rule.

Thou liar lion-heart, but true lamb's-heart,
What hast thou gained? The evil thou invitest,
And is writ in thy hands, o'ertake thee now.

JUD.—And were my hands all checkered
with bad lines,

With heart and head I'd win my way, nor fear;
For hands are not all, but the heart is much
Toward making one a man; and by this sign
Thou art no man, and dare not face a man,
But only stab a child, or slay a man
Helpless from wounds.

SIM. He is not half a man

Who'll not defend a sister.

JUD. Against her husband,

Who hath already borne a wound for her.

GAD—For shame, be still. Yon caravan
will hear you.

Come, bottle wrath, nor give it to the winds.

JUD.—If we could sell the lad to distant land,
Were that not better than to take his life?

[Enter Haran and caravan.]

HAR.—Shepherds of many flocks and riches
great,

Ye favored offspring, of the heavens beloved,
Haran, an Ishmael dog, would give ye greeting.

SIM.—Though we are weak, the weak can
also bow,

And we would praise thee, lord of camels, he
Whose acres are th' extent of the whole earth,
And whose tent-bow is bent by God in heaven,
And pray you to so honor us, your slaves,
As to partake with us our frugal meal.

HAR.—The dogs may not eat at the mas-
ter's table;

Yet would we gather crumbs from 'neath your
feet,

But that time bids us hurry. Need ye aught
That we can give you? have ye aught to sell?

[Re-enter Levi and Dan with Jos.]

SIM.—We lack not aught. But if it please
thee, we

Have an aunt's son, child of a man who wrong'd
Thy father Ishmael, the son of Isaac,
Whom we would give thee, thus enabling thee
To sip revenge and sell thy enemy.

HAR.—Revenge is sweet; but how much is
his price?

SIM.—He should bring eighty silver pieces.

HAR.—My lord would not ask that much
for that lad;

For twenty silver pieces are too much.

JUD. (aside) Thou would'st not sell him
without Reuben's sanction?

SIM. (aside) O Reuben is a lamb led of all
crooks,

And if we call him, he'll hold court ag ain,

Make a decision and then rail at it;

While, if he sees him sold and gets the silver,
He will be richer, and be rid a foe.

Brother, forgive me; it were kindness to.

JUD. (aside) Well--so thou get two pieces
for each one,

And four for Reuben.

HAR. I'll give thee twenty pieces: sweet
is revenge.

SIM.—The eldest-born should have a dou-
ble portion,

Which would make twenty-two.

HAR. I will not give it.

LEVI (aside) The younger children, not of
age to claim

Their portion, will remit part, giving Reuben
His double share, if he should call for it;

And why shouldst thou have larger care for
him?

JUD (aside) I am content.

SIM. Then take the lad for twenty.

HAR.— [Holding his thumbs up.

[Ishmaelites sieze Jos. and bear him away.]

JOS.—O brothers, to do this! I came to you
Bearing you victual, nor have thought you ill,

And thus you would requite me. Ostriches
Desert their eggs, and deserts all unkind

That starve the caravan and bleach the bones
Do mother them, but there is nothing like

This in the world, where creatures sell their
flesh

To slavery. The lion walks too proud to slay
Except as needful. Have a crocodile's heart,

For though it must slay, yet it sheds a tear
Because it must; but ye, who are not forced,

Stand here dry-eyed.

HAR. [Paying money] He is a shrewish brat.

JOS.—Sirs, we are brethren; they have sold
their flesh

For money. There is the cake my mother
baked,

And I did bring it, and they sell their brother.

SIM.—O thou a brother! art thou not a king?

JOS.—And were I, I'd have mercy. I'd
not sell

You into slavery, were I a king.

O Reuben! Reuben! Reuben!

HAR. Slave, be still.

Peace be upon you, brethren, health and honor,
And may the sun or moon ne'er blind your
eyes

To many blessings.

LEV. May you have revenge,

And God deliver enemies to you
Always, as thus he hath this lad. Farewell.

HAR.—Farewell. [Exit caravan with Jos.]

JOS. (outside) Reuben! Reuben!
LEVI We must kill a kid,
Dabble this coat with blood, and bear it home,
That father may believe a beast hath slain
him. [Exeunt.]

SCENE 2.—By Jacob's well. Israel, wives
and children under a tree. Enter various
of Israel's sons.

ISR.—Children, for toil well done sit here
and rest:

And may you by good toil *aye* merit rest;
The flocks do well: God still doth prosper me.
My children, where is Joseph?

SIM. Is he not here?

ISR.—He left us now a fortnight since, to
bear

Our greeting to you, and a mess of things
Rachel his mother had prepared for you.
Did he not find you? I mistrust the child
is lost.

SIM.—Our father, on the way we found this
coat.

And thought it might be Joseph's, so we bro't
it here, knowing that thou couldst tell.

RACH.—My son's coat.—A beast's work—
he's dead.

BILHAH—We trust not: calm thyself.

ISR. I'll send

A party for him who shall find the lad.

RACH.—Ah, who by searching can find out
the dead?

ISR.—But if he be not dead. O dearest wife,
My fair, my beautiful, we must bear up.
Such trials come to all; and God is good:
He has been good to us. Bear up, my dear,
For his sake who shall be, the comforter
God sendeth as an angel from the throne
With health's-ease for our broken, wounded
hearts:

Perhaps the Ishia long expected, who
Shall comfort all; and we are humbled so,
Lest the great honor should enlarge us much.

RACH.—So comes the end. Is it for this,
O God,

We plan upon the future, bear our sons.
And set our store by them, to see them fall,
Smitten by lower creatures of thy build?
How vain our life is!—candle that blows out
At any little gust. All our empty joys

Are morning flowers, purple hued and rose,
That fade away before the noon has come,
And never bloom again, never again, never
again;

Bubbles that break as we cry out for joy;

Smoke vanishing. O dear my son, my son!

ISR.—Rachel, dear Rachel, don't.

RACH. I must, I must.

Thou canst not, husband, damn the tide of tears
With argument, nor with thy leaden words,
Beating the bruised spirit, sound the depths
Of mother-love---thou canst not understand.

Joseph, come back! come back, Joseph, come
back!

Thou wilt not come to-morrow or next week;
We may not look for thee in seven months,
No, for a year, no, for a hundred years.

Where art thou, Joseph? art thou on the plain
Bleaching upon the desert, rent and torn?

My poor boy, when I only have but one,
With only these lips, red like thine, to speak,
"Farewell, my mother!" O thou eloquent!
Red lips [kissing coat], red lips, red lips, I
kiss you.

Speak, son, in kisses. Hast thou forgotten love
And been dead but a week?

BIL. Come, mistress, rest.

RACH.—I go to rest, for when I die I'll rest.

DINAH—Come, mother, cheer thyself; Jo-
seph yet lives.

RACH.—Who says he lives?

DIN. Not who, but something whispers,
Dinah, bereaved Dinah, they who slew
Thy honorable husband, Shechem, have a plot,
And Joseph lives.

LEAR Thou shameless strumpet!
To slander so the men who saved thy honor.
Joseph is dead. God's judgment 'tis on her.
[Exit Leah, angrily.]

DIN.—He may be dead, but O bereaved one,
Something still whispers to the heart of Dinah,
Joseph still lives. It hath the voice of Shechem.

ISR.—Peace! 'tis no time for fancies so dis-
traught.

RACH.—They drive the sad away. Come,
Dinah, come.

Let us seek out a place, and weep, and weep.
O it is such a fatal thing to love. [Exit the two.]

ISR.—Now, must my grey hairs go in sor-
row down

To death, because of thee, my lovely boy,
My son, my son, because thou art no more.
Why did I let him go? Why did the earth
Not open up her jaws and gulp me down
Before I saw the day that thou didst die?
Why roar the heavens not in anguish now,
Shedding their lightnings to beat on my breast,
As thus I do, to let my poor heart out,
Instead of being one great placid blue?
Why do the old live and the young depart,
The ancients live in anguish, and the young
Pass ere the dews of morning cease to shine
Into the blackness of eternal night?
Why, why, why? O why, why, why, why?

JUD.—Come, father, father.

ISR. Be still, and let me roar.

O that I e'er was born! would I were dead!
Life hath been furrowed with deep woes for me,
And O that I have ever breeded life,
The terrible, the terrible, that ends in death.
Blessed the eunuch, blessed is the maid,
Blessed the child that dies in infancy,
And doubly blessed not to be at all.

Rachel, what sorrows I have brought to thee!
Better for thee had I ne'er seen thy face.
But go—go quickly.

JUD. Where?

ISR. To hunt the lad.
Ye who are married, stay; comfort your wives
While ye can, for there comes a time
When comfort dies. Go, Dan, and search.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE 3.—General market at Thebes. Passing throngs. Among the slaves on sale, Joseph. Potaphar, Zeleika, Haran.

POT. (pointing to an ugly negro) I think that is the one we want: is n't it, wife?

ZEL.—O yes, indeed. He will be such an ornament in the court: let him go naked, and he will shine like clay veneer, terra cotta, ebony wood, or black marble from the sources of the Nile: a piece of furniture that visitors will admire so much they will chip off pieces for keepsakes.

POT.—He will not do: he might be knocked to atoms by relic hunters, and friends desirous of mementos of our taste, and callers wishing to get a piece to match with for the purchase of a counterpart. But how is this one here?

ZEL.—That venerable pile? I am certain he is prehistoric; and how much he could remember, if his memory is good! Perhaps he was one of the angels that the women* fell in love with, of old. A look at him would be an appetiser for a feast; or if he do accompany a visitor to the door, the beauty of his countenance will be an invitation that cannot be resisted, but will make occasional callers fast friends. His smile has welcome written on it a cubit long.

POT.—Welcome for food, thou meanest.

ZEL.—All other mouth-welcome is but tongue-deep.

POT.—Has n't that Abyssinian a magnificent form? By the divine Osiris, she is beautiful.

ZEL.—Well, my master Potaphar, I will trudge on home, and leave thee to thy Abyssinian. A slave, and such a slave!

POT.—"My master Potaphar," O what a term! You women are remarkable creatures. Now, the hosts of Pharaoh move at my command, and yet at a twist of the finger thou dost drive and compel me, as though I were a slave indeed: commander of the commander art thou, and yet thou dost "lord" and "master" me: that's good. We free men go and pick women to rule us, propose that we capitulate, and so pass into endless servitude. How many conquerors are conquered by women! How do you do it, little one?

ZEL.—Great slaves ye are. I pity men, my lord,

Who must be fondled, coddled ever, or
They raise a breeze that drives us to shipwreck,
And who when fondled cry out they are slaves.
Men are exacting. Man's desire is flesh—
Cooked flesh for eating, soft flesh for his sport;
For these he rages; woman giving these,
Tames him, and so may live: and that is all.

POT.—And yet I serve thee, and buy thee slaves to serve thee, and am no servant. O wife, and art thou angry? Thou hast so rough a time. Come, what reward wilt thou give me for the slave I mean to buy thee? nothing but anger?

ZEL.—O what reward? something most excellent.

POT.—What is it, wife?

ZEL.—I will not tell thee now; some other time; to-night, we'll say. As soon as we shall come to our chamber thou wilt remind me of thy wages.

POT.—Thou naughty Greek!

ZEL.—By Juno, no.

If thou couldst see the Eleusinian games (And O thou oughtest see Athenians strive), Thou'd not say that. Thou naughty, naughty man,

We women but lie 'neath your naughtiness.

There is a bright youth! is he not, indeed?

Buy him, my dear. [Indicating Joseph.]

POT. I think this one is better.

ZEL.—No, I want him.

POT. So thou hast found a lover.

ZEL.—Out of revenge for thy Abyssinian.

POT.—Is he much handsomer than I?

ZEL.—Ever so much. Hurry, dear, bid.

POT.—What asketh thou for this fellow?

HAR.—Osiris, Ra, and all gods bless thee, sir.

POT.—Thanks, merchant. But what is this slave's price?

HAR.—The market's full, my lord.

POT. Quite full. What is his price?

HAR.—It seems the many-mouthed Nile with them all doth bless

Egypt this season, good my lord.

POT. Why, so it doth.

I see thou hast a slave: what is his price?

HAR.—He is a youth that, though so young, is skilled

In all the games, his muscles trained with clubs And wrestling; and his mind is raised above Vulgar, though he a slave is, by the knowledge Of mathematics and philosophy:

For he is war's chance, not a slave by birth; Of Greece, my lord, yet knowing Hebrew, too, And worthy of a lord so high as thou.

A hundred silver pieces is low price for him.

POT.—A nice tale that.

ZEL. O splendid! is n't it?

HAR.—Madam, he is

A prize for thee: discreet, a perfect man, Bright, mobile face: the gods have favored him.

POT.—A nice tale that: thou hast thy story well.

HAR.—My lord, would I lie for a slave? Farewell.

ZEL.—Now, Potaphar!

POT. I meant not thou didst lie, (Though well enough I know that thou didst lie) [aside.

But thou hast fixed thy price above the clouds, The which I cannot scale.

HAR. Farewell, my lord.
ZEL.—O get him me. I want him, husband dear.

I'll never speak to thee unless thou dost.

POT.—That fellow's price is heavier than my purse.

HAR.—Oh, ho, my lord! a paltry sum like that

Heavier than the purse of my good lord,
With Pharaoh and all the land to back it!
That is a splendid joke, indeed, my lord.

POT.—No joke, forsooth. I cannot stand the price.

HAR.—What wilt thou give?

POT. Why, seventy's enough.

HAR.—Ninety, I say.

POT. Eighty, then.

HAR. So be it;

An angry fate decrees I shall be poor.

Do my lord or his lady wish aught else?

POT.—We have enough—more than we want, I think.

HAR.—Indeed ye have enough for what ye gave.

POT.—Bring him and his indentures to my house—

Inquire for Potaphar,—and get thy pay.

And now, Zeleika—

ZEL. Thou darling boy!

I'll kiss thee eighty times for doing this,

When we get home. Now, merchant,

Hast thou these talked-of glasses that reveal

The very thing that one desires to see?

Hast thou the trees that sing? the talking birds?

The maiden zone that keeps one always young?

Thou see'st so much that thou should have these.

HAR.—Here are perfumes from Ceylon, and new fruits,

And here a magic ointment—

ZEL. Wool fat, sir.

Cosmetics I use not, nor aught such stuff.

POT.—The merchant must mistake: this mirror shows

The very thing most women want to see:

Look, wife.

ZEL. Poh! O see those fabrics yonder.

[Exit, followed by Pot.; and curtain.]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—Interior of El Karnac, on fete occasion. Zeleika, Asenath and Joseph in box in foreground. Joseph seats them, and conducts himself as a slave.

ZEL.—Cousin Asenath, thou art learned in all The rituals and mysteries: instruct A Grecian.

ASEN. All I know I'll tell.

If father were here! he doth know so much.

There's much that I have learned from him, while playing

When he was at his rolls and instruments; For I heard much he did not think I heard. He is so wise. He is a holy man:

Never his beard or eyebrows grow. I went With him once to the field, and learned a song; The fellah plowing—O a big man—sung; It goes thus:

“Thresh for yourselves,
Thresh for yourselves,
O Oxen.”

And I forget the rest.

ZEL. Why, chatterer, Thou talkest like a child: where is thy doll?

ASEN.—O I'm a sorry age; not child or woman.

They've taken dolls away, and I have left Nothing but to watch; and so I learn.

I'd like to be a woman.

ZEL. Wouldst thou wed?

ASEN.—Oh, of course.

ZEL. What for a man wouldst thou like?

ASEN.—I don't like men—save father; he is good.

ZEL.—Dost thou not like this man who waits on us? [Indicating Joseph.]

ASEN.—O, he's a boy! he's good to fan us so.

Cousin, dost thou like him? O ho! O ho!

ZEL.—Thou rogue! open thy mouth in a crowd And someone will get thy tongue; beware!

He is a prudent lad.

ASEN. Prudent? what don't he tell?

ZEL.—I mean he is a likely one.

ASEN.

Like to do what?

ZEL.—Like to like bad girls. Ask him if 'tis so.

ASEN.—Not I.

ZEL. Why, girl?

ASEN.—Only bad girls would ask that.

ZEL.—If words are checkers, then thou playest well.

ASEN.—If speech is batting, thou hast knocked thy fall.

ZEL.—And so we keep the ball on. Asenath, Riddle the likeness 'twixt a medicine-eel

And that head gear.

ASEN. Why, they are both to sea (see.)

ZEL.—Wrong. They are both shocking.

I would Potaphar heard this; it's a good one. What's the resemblance 'twixt a cat and bread?

ASEN.—They both were made to eat,

ZEL. No, there's "b" in both.

ASEN.—I do not see the point.

ZEL. Dost thou expect to?

The point of jokes is like a razor's edge, And breaks and wires entering dull heads.

ASEN.—Or coming through thick tongue. Let's cease girl's talk,

And criticise folks, as the women do.

O ho! the rites begin. The great lord of the earth

Comes in procession.

[Enter, Pharaoh, borne under purple canopy, and attended by fan bearers and other servants; trumpeters and band at van, followed

by officers bearing Pharaoh's armor and insignia of office, these preceding Pharaoh; behind him, 20 priests bearing censers and images of the gods; behind them, Apis, attended by nurses; and army.

Doth he not seem a god,
Lent from the heavens for our guidance?

Yonder is father. [Throws him a kiss.

That image is the mighty Ptah, the god
Who rules the sun, and gives us heat and life;
Lord of the truth, the ruler of the sky.
King of both worlds, weaver of the beginning,
Producer of the egg that hatched the sun
And moon, the double god: hence, for his head
The beetle, that is double, and brings forth
Of self alone.

See, there is Ra—four Ras :

The little child upon a lotus leaf,
For so he wanes in winter; then, a youth;
A bearded man then; then an aged one.
"The old man doth again become a child."

Jos.—Lady, might I ask what he rules?

ASEN. The year.

He's red as fire, and bears a winged sun.
Around the world he daily makes his way,
At night rowed by great spirits, to the east,
Through waters of the underworld.

There Osiris is,
And Isis, royal spouse. They both are green,
For they are parents of all plants and trees,
Father and mother of all fruits: behold
The laden float of Isis.

Jos. Lady, pardon a slave,
But why those mourners?

ASEN. They weep Osiris' death.
Set slew him. Far, beneath the sacred sands,
There, under tamarisks consigned, reposes
Osiris. Now ruleth he the underworld.
Upon the setting sun men's souls are borne
Thither, while still their bodies at the ferrying
Are wailed upon. Osiris sits on throne
Upborne by lotus blossoms growing from
The stream of life: before him come the dead,
Whose heart is laid upon the scale and weighed
With ostrich feather on the beam for weight,
And if the soul have not committed one
Of the forty-two sins, the scale uptilts aright,
Hathor and Nut pour water of life on him,
And to immortal dwelling passeth he.

ZEL.—Is that not sublime? but little one,
How canst thou know so much? I will forget.

ASEN.—I'll bring thee books.

ZEL.— Bring Joseph them,
And he can read and teach me: I hate study.

ASEN.—Next Horus comes; Osiris shall re-
vive:

Horus, his son, who rides in sun-boat shall
Avenge his death, destroy the works of Set,
The mildew, serpent and the crocodile,
And in the spring Osiris shall revive.
The rites begin. [Low chant, and dancing.

There Hathor, Horus wife, is,
Who rules the dance and revel and maternity
And myteries of love: so many forms

She wears: and she is fettered. I know not
much of her.

But there is Apis that they consecrate.
The black bull Mnervis. See his massive flanks.
Is he not strong, and of a pretty black?
Ptah's beetle is beneath his tongue. But there!
I'll say no more. . . . "Apis is found." For
forty days

The death of Apis hath been mourned, and now
The new one that hath fed those forty days
In Nelopolis meadows is led here
To be anointed, and then borne away
To Memphis, to the temple of great Ptah.
They burn incense before him.

PRIESTS (chanting)---

Ptah, the begetter,

We bring thy bull before thee.

Thou that makest thyself to be a god,
hear us,

And as thou hast made Apis, even so
make Egypt fruitful.

Mnervis, child of Ra, be victorious.

ASEN.—Ah, there is cousin Potaphar.

POTI-PHE. [Addressing people from pulpit.
Love truth, ye people, and revere your ruler,
Who hath the care of you, and hateth lies.
An ostrich feather will outweigh the soul
Of hypocrite or liar or a drunkard,
Or babbler, or him guilty of another sin.
Be strong as Apis is, to do the right,
And as the Ibis that destroyeth serpents,
Do ye undo the evils Satan wrought
By laboring virtuously and meddling not.
Sons, daughters, when the ostrich sees the sun
He hides his head: do ye look on the sun,
[Indicating Pharaoh.

And worship as this great god prays for you.

[All kneel, as Pharaoh burns incense suc-
cessively before each image and Apis. Sub-
dued music during rite. Curtain.

SCENE II.—Room in Potaphar's house;
mummy in case, leant against the wall, and
other appropriate furnishing. Potaphar, in
white apron, and uniform of soldiers of the
upper Nile; and Zeleika.

POT.—Kiss me, wife.

ZEL. No, sir!

I will not till thou buy that frock I want.

POT.—Hermes instructs me that a wife who
sells

Her kisses to her husband will, no doubt,
Give them to others; that't is best to take
What is our right, nor humor woman's whims.

ZEL.—Then Hermes is a fool. You men all
hold

The purse-strings till we have to beg for life,
Or else abstract the coins by stealth, to buy
What things we need and are entitled to;
Or if not by these methods, then must sell
The favors we can give, as if a hawk.

Bargaining with our husbands for the means
Our lives demand, by selling our embraces.
Give us our dues, and you may have your fill
Without a term, sir lord.

POT.—Poor girl! poor Greek!
How thou art tyrannized, thou pretty doll!

ZEL.—Hand me that fan. I'm tired of thy ways.

POT.—My poor wife—
ZEL.—Do n't call me poor. If anything
Rouses my ire, it is sympathy.
Don't pity me.

* POT.—I merely wished to ask
How our new slave is doing—he I bought
For eighty silver pieces at thy word,
And was pledged eighty kisses from thy lips:
But thy lips have denied me what I bought.

ZEL.—Joseph? O sweet, he is too nice a man;
Just splendid, husband. Our guests admire
him,

Marvel about him, treat him as a lord
(As thou dost know he is), and say to me—

POT.—Bah! they will spoil him. Art thou
not aware

A good slave makes a miserable master?
And if thou humor him, he will be spoiled.

ZEL.—Shoo! thou art a rough man, used to
command,

And knowest only criminals and soldiers,
Camels and hounds that must be lorded o'er;
But honors wear as light on Joseph, dear,
As were he lord indeed: in everything
He is exact, aware of his true place,
And ne'er usurping by a word or look.
None but a master could so serve a man.

POT.—More praise than thou hast given me
for years.

ZEL.—You men want praises regular as
meals,

Yet will not let us give their dues to others.
Lest praise of them impoverish you. I'm mad.

POT.—Forgive me, dear; I only spake in
jest.

ZEL.—I hate to be trifled with.

POT.—I'll not more offend.

Joseph I know is worthy, the best man
I ever had, and versed in sciences.

ZEL.—Tax him to bear more of thy cares
for thee.

POT.—What cares, thou silly woman? Why,
already,

He is the overseer of our slaves.

ZEL.—Make him to keep accounts, thy
hardest work.

He is a man most fitted for the house.

POT.—O thou wouldst make a mess of it,
thou goose.

Why, little woman, art thou bright to-day?

ZEL.—Yea, very bright.

POT.—A woman cannot plan.

ZEL.—I'll warrant thee. Just try my word
a month.

Thou sayest we'd run counter in our plans,
And now I want to prove this plan of mine,

POT.—Ah, what a mess you folks would
make of it!

ZEL.—Ah, what a mess you men have made
made of it!

POT.—Dost thou think thou canst manage
like a man?

ZEL.—No, I hope not; I'd manage so much
better.

POT.—And thou a woman merely?

ZEL.—I can prove it.

POT.—Thou mean, mean girl, thou'lt have
thy way, it seems.

ZEL.—Thou mean, mean boy, of course I'll
have my way.

POT.—Goose, it would ruin me.

ZEL.—Try it, thou bear,
Try it and see; 't is easier on thee.

POT.—Humor a child or woman and thou'lt
spoil them.

ZEL.—Thou'rt in bad humor, and it runs,
to-day.

POT.—I cannot risk it.

ZEL.—O thou cannot now!

I prison thy denials in thy throat
With hands and kisses. Now wilt thou accede?

POT.—No, it would be—

ZEL.—Then lie in prison yet.

There's twenty kisses more. Dost thou yield
now?

POT.—Yield while thou kissest me? No,
I'll deny,

To gain the favor of thy kisses still.

ZEL.—Then thou art free: but wilt thou
grant me now?

POT.—Not till thou payest me the eighty
kisses.

ZEL.—If I do that?

POT.—Why, then I'll make the trial.

ZEL.—O thou dear husband, thou art good
to me,

Far better than I merit. I do wish
That I was better, husband, for thy sake,

For I am such a fickle, silly piece,
Tormenting thee and giving thee no joy.

POT.—Dear, thou art just the very wife I want
And I would not exchange thee for the world.

ZEL.—But I deny thee kisses that are thine,
When thou dost give me everything I want.

POT.—What, goosey! crying? thou art like
the nut

Hid in a prickly burr, but good at heart,
And no one knoweth it so well as I.

We men do prize things as we pay for them;
Kisses we coax from maidens seem so sweet,

But wives who give them when unasked, altho'
The kisses are as sweet, are not esteemed,

Since not so rare as to be luxury.

Now, child, do not so chide thyself with this.

ZEL.—But O I'm not so good as I should be.

POT.—Child, no one is. I love thee, little
one.

ZEL.—Thou lovest me so well, poor Potaphar,
I fear I cannot love thee well enough.

POT.—Didst thou not love me, I know thou
wouldst not

Fear thou dost fail of loving me enough.

ZEL.---O trusting boy, thou art too good for me.

Believe me, Potaphar. I love thee well:

And yet I wish that I did love thee more,
Thou art so noble and so kind to me.

POT.---Nay, not so good as I would like to be,
My wee one, for the sake of my bad wife.
What wilt thou do when I am gone?

ZEL. How long thy stay?

POT.---The space of two moons.

ZEL. What will I do?

I'll think of thee, Potaphar. [Enter, Jos.

POT.---Joseph. I have a mind when I am gone,
To leave the charge of my affairs with thee.
Thou knowest figuring?

Jos. Fairly, my lord.

POT.---Keep the accounts, then; see what
things are wanted,

And cancel all the wants: and indoor

Have charge of all. Zeleika, love, farewell.

ZEL.---Good husband, farewell.

POT. And again, farewell.

Joseph, remember. [Exit.

ZEL. Potaphar is glad

To be rid of these figures, for he counts
Them slowly on his fingers; but I had a time,

A rare time, Joseph, getting him to yield.

How dost thou like thy place?

Jos. How else but well?

My master is a kind and noble man.

ZEL.---A splendid soldier, blunt as such
men are,

Quick in perceiving tactics, strong and kind,

But slow in marshaling a company

Of figures.

Jos.---Lady, no man is great in everything.

They that do everything do nothing well;

But geniuses apply to just one point,

And climbing there assiduously, at length

Gain eminence where all the world beholds.

So is thy husband, my good Potaphar.

These trivial things we slaves can manage well

Should not harass him and divide his mind

Till he can put but half-heart in his work.

ZEL.---What I think, too. But I could never
speak

Nicely as that. Thou art a Greek: the Greeks

Speak O so nicely: and when first I saw thee

I knew thee for my countryman (I'm Greek),

And had my husband buy thee.

Jos. I am a Hebrew.

ZEL.---Thou'rt young and modest, but as
Greek as both.

None can observe us here.

Jos. I read upon a tomb:

"What in secret we declare,*

Of that He is aware;

He hath made us---we are known;

Present He when we are alone."

ZEL.---O thou art wise. Well, well, we'll
have our time.

I feel not well, and must more quiet seek.

Fetch that roll good Asenath brought, unto

My chamber, presently, and read to me;

And see if that will medicine my grief.

Jos.---Yes, lady. [Exeunt, and curtain.

SCENE III.---Zeleika's chamber. Zeleika
at mirror. Enter, Joseph.

ZEL.---Close to the door. How dost thou
like my gown?

Thou hast an eye for beauty: is it not pretty?

Jos.---My lady, thou art very beautiful.

ZEL.---Dost thou think so? O then I am
so glad. [Seating herself in his lap.

It was for thee I so arrayed myself,

Because I love thee, Joseph. O thou sweet,

Acute surprise doth whelm me the more,

O Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, help me, dear:

Thou canst not understand how I am tried,

All through my love for thee, thou pretty boy:

And when a woman stoops to tell her love,

Laying her modesty aside to do it,

And standing forth in spirit nakedness,

Thou mayest be certain that the love is true,

True, Joseph, true. Kiss me, dear.

Jos.---Lady, what means this? Thou art
not thyself.

Only thy husband hath a right to these:

Do n't, do n't, my lady, but bethink thyself:

Thou hast a husband.

ZEL. Ah, the cruel fates!

I know it. Joseph: but I wedded him

When young and giddy; and can such as I

Love a great Coptic who is slow and dull?

Thou art my kind. Dismiss thy iciness,

And we will have a time, and no one know.

Jos.---Lady, am I a dog, that I should do
this thing?

Dost thou not love thy husband?

ZEL. I so thought, along

My days that nathless had an emptiness,

Till once I saw thee, and then love was born

Suddenly, but mighty as the grave,

Sudden as death; and now I see how I

Have spoiled my life by that one great mistake.

O Joseph, sometimes what we laughing do

Begins a drift that clogs our lives, until

The waters of our passions overflow.

And inundate and devastate the heart.

O Joseph, I do beg thee, I, thy mistress,

To pity me: for slave as thou art here,

Thou art not crossed in love, and so art happy.

There's many a slave more happy in his chains

Than those bejeweled beings that he serves,

Nor half the slave before the sight of heaven.

I am the slave, thou master: pity me,

O Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, thou dear darling
boy.

Jos.---Do n't; this is wrong.

ZEL. O is it wrong?

Kisses are wrong! Why, Joseph, that we should

*Free rendition of an inscription on an Egyptian tomb. Supposed to be the oldest writing in existence.

Give all our kisses to one man alone
Is only a decree of selfishness.
And only a short time ago, my dear,
Egyptian women, when they wedded, took
Receipt for all the goods they brought their
husbands,

And when they wanted went with someone else,
First taking back the goods : and this was law.
If I love thee, I am behind the times,
And doing only as the mothers did.

JOS.—Still, this is wrong?

ZEL.—Wilt blame the dead?
But thou dost say it, and that makes it wrong.
Thy word my law: 'tis wrong if so thou
think it.

Forgive me; pity me. I never loved
Until I saw thee, though I thought I did,
And love with woman is the all-in-all,
Not the bright toy it is with flattering man,
Amusing him awhile, then thrown aside.
'T is wrong : and yet. O Joseph, love for thee
Has caused me to buy thee from slavery,
Give thee a home, and beg for thy own good,
Until thou art advanced above all others.
Is love so bad a thing?

JOS.—Indeed, I pity thee.
I would be most inhuman, did I not.

O my good mistress, for thy own true peace
I would I had been sold to a hard man,
And made to delve as lowest artisan,
Rather than, being exalted by thy kindness,
Ruin thy happiness because thou 'rt good.
An ill fate seems to dog me : everything
I touch withers and is smitten dead.

ZEL.—Do not, my dear, upbraid thyself.
No, no!

Ah, all my life had been in darkness cast.
Hadst thou not as a sun arose on me,
Dispelled the winter of my loneliness,
And by thy shining called forth flowers of joy,
Birds of thanksgiving, watersprings of hope :
Thy coming an oasis in a life
Desert and barren.

JOS.—O lady.

ZEL.—Call me Zeleika.

JOS.—Mistress Zeleika, restrain thyself.
And thou wilt yet find happiness and calm
In giving all to thy most generous spouse.
I wouldst thou hadst a child by him, my lady.
For then the child would link you two together.
Marriage is not completed till there's issue.
As for myself, I pity thee, I do;
For all are prone to err, even in loving.
And erring therein is a blight to life.
Howbeit, if thou reasonest aright,
Thou wilt agree that this is best repressed;
Nor merely best, but the necessity.
I would not be rough, lady, but 't is true,
And this my firmness is the greatest kindness:
This must not be.

ZEL.—O Joseph, bear with me.
I know I am a goose, a silly thing,
But thou didst promise to do my command :
Do then embrace me, if that we must part.

JOS.—Thy husband and my master Potaphar

Would sanction not this last command of thine,
And in obedience to him, I'll not.

ZEL.—I am thy mistress, I shall bid thee, sir.

JOS.—But I am servant of the Most High
God,

To whom I owe my welcome in this land,
And He says, No. His word I will obey
At any event. [Rising to go.

ZEL. (clinging to him), O thy god indeed!
What do he know of mortals and their needs?
Could he but understand the fiery thoughts
That sweep our beings, if he had a spark
Of knowledge not all-tyrannous. he would
Command us to enjoy, not say, repress.

I like our gods the best, for thro' their veins
Runs hot blood that can sympathize with us.
Hathor doth amour men—gives them her best
Upon her god-like limbs and snowy breast;
Apis is worshipped for his strength of loins;
And Isis for her womb that sprouts all green;
They all delight in sports all creatures crave,
Witnessed as lawful by the sex they gave.

Thou hast a gloomy and unsocial god.
And thou art cold : we put hot lips to thee.
And thou dost peel them like a frosted metal,
Though thou art young, sweet one, a beardless
boy,

Whom one would think were warm as sum-
mer-time.

No, thou shalt not leave. Many mighty ones
Would give a fortune for thy place, my dear.
We women are not dangerous, or black,
As thou, most cruel stripling, doth suppose.
Try me, thou 'lt find I am well shapen, boy.
Feel here : my heart is beating hotly : see.
And I have greater charms, all, all for thee.
Wouldst see my charms?

JOS.—O lady, let me go.
Why, thou dost tremble like a quaking asp.

ZEL.—My passion overpowers me, thou sweet.
Surely my raging fire must stir thee.
My lips are leeches, that forever could
Suck on thy dear lips, glued there by thy sweets.

JOS.—Alas! I boil; and yet I cannot yield.
Thou, dear, my mistress, art with-holden me,
Thou only of thy husband's vast estate,
Of bounden right, and were I to submit.
The fire of our passion, when burned out,
would leave

Thy mouth filled full of ashes and of dust,
And make me—

ZEL.—O Joseph, just a span to joys
For which we yearn. Am I not beautiful?

JOS.—Sweet woman, all too beautiful for
safety.

[Breaking away, flees, Zel. retaining his gar-
ment.]

ZEL. (solus) Gone, gone, my fate! Just as I
grasp the flower

It falls to pieces. I embrace but shadows.
O Joseph, love, this garment has been on thee,
Embraced thee close but oftener than I—
More blessed therein than poor Zeleika is :
Mere senseless fabric is more blest than I.
O thou dear garment, I could baby-like

Play thou wert Joseph, and embrace thee so,
Out of the mighty love I bear for him;
And I, hemmed in by taunting luxury,
Would give it all, and live in abject want,
Linked to a slave, could I but have my love—
Love is a thing so needful to our bliss.
But women must not court: e'en Venus failed
To win Adonis, though he had have won
The coldest maid with like hot argument.

What have I done? ye gods, what have I
done?

I am an evil woman. Potaphar,
Poor Potaphar, so kind and leal to me,
Thou dost not know the vampire that I am,
Sucking thy life's blood as I lie by thee.
Poor Potaphar, how shall I meet thee now?
Would I were dead, that I had died a babe.

[Cry without. Potaphar returns.

And with this tell-tale coat here in my chamber!
Joseph, the dog! O how I hate, hate, hate him.
I'll punish him. Help, help! help me, help!
[Rends her dress, and stamps as in a scuffle.

Enter, servants.

There, catch him, take him, hold him fast.
... Joseph, who assaulted me. [Faints.
1ST SERV.—What will our master Potaphar
say to this?

2D SERV.—He'll rage and fume—come,
chafe her hands,—he'll rage and fume, and
fume and rage, and turn things upside down.
I'll never wish I was Joseph again. I'd
rather never be up than to have to come down
after I was up. Heighy-tighty!

POT. (without) Damn him. Go, ye! bring
him—quick! O, the ape, the asp!

2D SERV.—Swearing at Joseph! Water
here! bathe her temples—so. [Enter Pot.

POT.—Back, vermin! Dear, art thou hurt?
O eyes, my two suns, open. O my fair—

ZEL. (recovering) O Potaphar, my husband,
I was wrong,

And thou wert right; but thou art always right.
It will not do to much advance a man
Of slavish mind and habit.

POT. No more of that,
For what is past cannot be remedied.
But tell me how it was.

ZEL. I was up here,
My chamber door unlocked, when he came in,
Grinning a lecherous way, and asked a kiss;
And when I ordered him away, took hold
As if to force me. Then I cried aloud,
And he made movement as to run away,
When it came over me to hold him fast
To meet his just deserts; and so I clung,
Till, tearing loose, he left his coat with me,
And fled just ere these came to succor me.
There is that garment. He hath torn my dress,
The new one, husband that thou boughtest me.

POT.—The mangy mongrel! They will nab
him soon.

By all the gods, I'll kill the vicious brute;
I'll torture him, and make death lingering,
That he may have full time to think of it.

[Noise without.] They bring him.

ZEL. No, dear Potaphar;
Hear me this once, for I am right this once:
The fault was mine, in that I plead for him
To be advanced above the sty, his place;
And had he been kept down, he ne'er had
dared

To do this evil. Put him in a cell,
Break thou his spirit, make his a dog's life,
But let him live—Nay, hear me, Potaphar!
For if thou slay him, then must come a trial,
Or if thou do accuse him, and bethink
Before the judges of the forty-two nomes
What crowds and questions! O I shrink from
it

In natural modesty. Come, feel for me.
Thou mayest thrust him in the prison, dear,
Without a charge, and discipline thy slave
Without surcease. Come, do this thing for me.

POT.—It is the best. Out, slaves, and bring
the jailer. [Exit, two servants.

Yet I would like the joy of choking him.
Would I could torture him a year for each
Piece that I gave for him, the low-born wretch.
Knowledge is the ruin of a slave.

[Enter, servants, with Joseph.

1ST SERV.—Here he is. I caught him, mas-
ter.

2D SERV.—No, master, I did; that fellow
lies.

3D SERV.—Yes, so dost thou? I myself did—
POT.—Hold there! break off! Thou
damned, dull cur! thou lecherous mongrel
dog! (slapping Jos.) thou devil, demon, thou
deformed toad, thou viper, thou big-mouthed
crocodile! O I will pay thee, fool, for this.
What! dost thou not answer me?

Jos.—'Tis best for thee I do not answer
thee.

POT.—Ape! answerest thou so? [Smiting
him.] Shameless, lusty, plotting villain, hunt-
ing the bedroom of thy mistress! Shepherd,
snail, ingrate—what art thou not? Look on
my wife—she plead with me to give thee the
place thou hast had in the family, and even
since thou hast turned upon her, and injured
us, she hath plead for thee, because thou wert
a slave; think of that, O Crime!

2D SERV.—I saw him down where the—

POT.—Out, devils! [Exit, servants.] O the
damned dull lot! [Enter, Jailer.] Trust him in
the prison, jailer: keep him strict.

JAIL.—My master Potaphar, I am at thy ser-
vice; and I pray thee and thy good mistress
to accept my most humble greetings, with all
due compliments. But prithee, sir, upon what
charge am I to detain him?

POT.—What, crying beautiful? Sir, I've
no time:—for discipline: and I will never call
for him. Keep him forever.

[Exit, Zel., followed by Pot.

JAIL.—Ah, very strange in this uxorious but
worthy captain. This is practically giving
thee to me, my good—

Jos.—Joseph, sir,

JAIL.—Joseph: and thou canst serve me graciously in taking oversight of the prison; for am a studious man, and scarce have time, sir, for the more onerous labors of my office. If thou art mine and never to be called for, I can let thee keep the hall of the prison (for thou must never be seen outside or it were up with me), and read my books, and tell me whatsoever things I desire to know: so we can be helpful to each other, sir. But thou must keep it quiet, sir: I risk my life for thee. I trust thou wilt not find me such a hard master but what— Ah, what a vision dawns upon our eyes. Fair wonder— [Enter, Asenath]

ASEN.—Sir, pardon me. Is cousin Asenath not here? where shall I find her? But Joseph, wilt do. Here is the book I promised to fetch you; rememberest? take it, sir. Were there no girls where thou didst come from? I leave it here for him, kind sir. [Lays roll down and exit.]

JAIL.—Gone suddenly as a bubble, that with all its splendor and magnificence, while we look at it, quietly is not. And we, too, must be gone. Take the book, sir; I am a very coromant in greed, but I after the higher and intellectual feasts. [Exeunt, Jos. with roll.]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—Hall of prison. Joseph reading roll in dim background. Voices of Butlar and Baker issue from a cell.

BAK.—It seems like season of the flood, to-day.

BUT.—However it doth seem, it is not so.

BAK.—For my part, it doth seem like time for flood

Each day I spend in this damp, dismal place, Where all our light is murky, all is still, And the bare stone and iron are so cold. I cannot help but image in my mind The Nile at overflow, and country folks Sowing their rice upon the shallow sea, As I so often saw them in my youth.

BUT.—The light is fair and brilliant out of here.

E'en through these walls you know we mark the change,

And can distinguish when 'tis day, when night.

Outside, I fancy that the sun is shining,

And there is sound of vehicles and voices.

And sight of forms, and faces full of light,

Instead of flood. For flood, it seems to me, They offer sacrifice unto the Nile.

BAK.—They do not know how happy they are now. [Sings:

Lord Toler stood by the sounding sea;

The mist was heavy and black;

And plunging monsters and men saw he,

In the seething ocean's track.

All men love sometime, and I've had my time: A slight girl, hardly woman, yet not girl:

And when the mother Nile cut off supply, They took her as the purest maid of all, To give the angry goddess. I can see Her standing yet, with crowns and flowers hung,

And wide eyes, lips apart, and fingers working, Awaiting silently. So ends my tale. [Sings:

A mist arose, and a ghost therein—

The mist was heavy and black.

This prison life will kill me. Even now It steals in sharp pains through my very bones And makes a dull, fierce pressure on my temples,

Besides the trouble and anxiety. [Sings.

Stretching a league its fingers thin

In the seething ocean's track.

I would be thankful for a good bed now.

BUT.—I cannot sleep. I had a dream last night. [Joseph begins to unlock cell.

BAK.—And so did I---one that still rings and rings

Down in my heart like a dull bell of death.

Ho, thou out there! how fareth it outside?

JOS. (entering cell) How fare I? O I am fenced off

From worldly baubles that distract men's minds,

Protected from temptations sown with men,

Fed without having even to turn my hand,

And given leisure in the which to read

And grow wise; best of all, these favors

Are made perpetual. How do ye fare?

BAK.—Thanks, bad enough; it is a heavy load To wear these chains all night.

JOS. Hold out thy hands,

And I'll remove the chains.

BAK. Is not the Nile at flood?

I dreamed it was.

JOS. The hidden ritual says:

"The floods of spring are Nature's menstuous flow

Ere she conceives the largess of the year

From that strange paramour, the Sun, who comes

By day, but never deigns to spend the night

With her;" and this is autumn, sir,

When leaves the sun, not when he comes to her.

BUT.—The baker in this oven is near done for.

He's baking sad. [They enter hall of prison.

JOS. He's drunk the wine of woe.

BAK.—I've lain upon these cold, hard stones for months;

So long, these furry rodents dwelling here

Have grown familiar with my very face,

And, knowing that my anguish makes me kin

To all the wants of even meanest creatures,

Run 'round me during meals and pick up crumbs,

Gnawing between my ankles, as they blink

Their shining eyes toward my relaxed face,

Smiling at them, the only friends I have.

The Sphinx keeps a secret,

Howbeit a woman,

Which proves her a goddess,
And not a mere human.

Besides the rats who wink wise eyes at me,
There's other vermin who are fond of me,
Who try to kiss, else bite me, in the bed.

BUT.—Thou hast something in bed with thee,
sayest thou,
And talkest of women and secrets: what is
this?

BAK.—I had a bad dream; water's a trou-
bulous subject,

And I did dream the Nile at overflow.

BUT.—Come, cast the horoscope—

BAK.—And jest at death.

BUT.—I had a dream, too; I will bring thee
wine,

And do thou follow after with the bread,
And Joseph, who is learned in the books,
Shall be interpreter.

JOS. With such as you,
Professionals, to bring me bread and wine,
I shall be much regaled.

BUT: My dream was this:
In my slumber a great vine was before me,
Branching in three parts from the roots thereof,
And it did seem to me the vine bore buds,
Her blossoms and her tendrils all shot forth.
And then a change; and where the blossoms
were

Hung clusters large and full of purple grapes.
I saw, and Pharaoh's cup was in my hand,
And I did take the grapes, and press them in
The cup of Pharaoh, which I took to him.
And he received and drank of it, as once,
Before I had offended to my hurt.

JOS.—The books of mystery have this to say:

To dream of vines betokens good,
Health and wealth in magnitude.

But thus the Voice declares, and thus speaks
God,

Who whispered in my ear when I saw not,
And this is verity: Behold, saith He,
Thou think'st the gods do speak to men in
dreams;

But there is one God far above them all,
Whom ye know not, but who is great in works,
Who, to cause you to fear and honor Him,
Hath chosen to reveal Himself in dreams,
Shadowing events to come, to your own books.
The true interpretation is this sort:

Thou sawest a vine which spread into three
branches:

The branches are three days. Within that time
Shall Pharaoh think on thee, lift up thy head,
And give thee thy old office, so thou shalt
Press out the grapes, and give the cup to him.

And now I pray thee, if this should be true,
Then think of me when it is well with thee,
And speak to Pharaoh about my case,
Till he shall bring me from this prison house:
For, sir, I speak the truth, the plain, good
truth,

I was stol'n from the country of the Hebrews
And sold as slave; and in this dungeon cast,

Not for a crime or wrong that I had done,
But through false witness, where if I should
speak,

I am so hedged about, I'd wrong a third
Who was my friend. Sir, wilt thou pity me?

BUT.—So that it proveth true, I swear I will;
Because, if true, the gods have talked with
thee,

And they will not communicate with sin.

Now, baker, see thy fears. We've had the
wine,

Bring now the bread, and feast on happiness.

BAK.—The sun may shine on thee and not
on me,

Though we touch hands; to dream of waters
dark,

And bakemeats and all else is ill for me.

The chapter endeth with my dream. 'Tis thus:

I dreamed of walking on my olden rounds,
And on my head three baskets, full of holes,
Woven so loosely: in the upper basket
All manner of bake-meats for Pharaoh.

And as I walked, the birds from neighboring
cliffs

Flew down and pecked the pastry in the baskets
That were upon my head.

JOS. 'T is breakfast time.

I pray, Excuse me; I like not the dream.

BAK.—Utter thy mind, I pray thee, good or
bad,

Scarce worse than death, which is what I ex-
pect.

JOS.—The book of mysteries hath this to
say:

A man who dreams of baskets will
Receive them soon, filled full of ill.

BAK.—This is not all, sir; I am sure of it.

JOS.—Thy dream is this: The baskets are
three days;

In that time Pharaoh shall choose another
To fill thy wanted place before the range,
And sending to the prison, take thee hence,
And crucify thee on a tree. The birds
Shall eat thy flesh, as in thy dream they ate
The bakemeats from the baskets on thy head.
Sir, may God pity thee and strengthen thee.

BAK.—I took the risk, and failing, go to
death.

Not quaking, but as going to long rest.

Yet that is horrible, to hang, and have
birds peck my eyes, and claw me; horrible
If still I should live in another form,
And wander on the winds five hundred years,
As ostriches that use their wings for sails,
Before I as a phoenix burn the old
body of sin, and rise to a new life!

Gods! if that girl should see me so debased,
And suffer in my shame! Sweet heaven, help.

Sirs, pardon me. I am too much a tongue.

We'll now have something better than the birds
Will have to dine on (though not very much),
For breakfast waits. [Enter, Jailor.

JAIL.—A right good morning to you, sirs?
How do you find yourselves? Sir butlar,

pleasanter days be yours. There is a reason why they should be pleasanter, because I fancy freedom is preferable to this, eh? and thou art to have freedom soon: not only freedom, but thy old office; in three days, sir, after thou hast purified thyself, sir. I'll be thy butler on this happy occasion, and remember thee to the wine; and do thou remember me on any occasion thou canst serve me, for thou canst not say but what I have treated thee fairly.

BAK.—Am I to be the skeleton at his feast of wine?

JAIL.—Eh? what dost thou mean? Three crows flew across the setting sun last eve, and the augurs say that within three days some guilty soul must be borne by the sun into the underworld; and at the same hour the forty-two judges convicted thee. Get into that cell.

[Curtain.]

SCENE II.—Joseph in prison, alone. Sings.

Across the fields abloom and green
Before the piquant spring,
Came Jacob, 'raptured at the scene,
Down hither journeying,
Even to Haran, where, behold,
From wells the servants drew;
"Good sirs," he cried—

[Ghost of Rachel appears.]

God of my fathers! Am I crazed indeed?
Have these cold dismal airs that numb my bones,
Crept through my marrow and deranged my brain?

[Ghost disappears.]

There, it is gone! Now do I sleep and dream?
Alas, my joints, stiffened with cold, dull pain,
And my pinched hands, chapped with inclemency,

Declare I am awake; I know I am:
Then whence this vision, this nightmare, this form,

That comes upon the canvas of the eyes,
And seems to stand upon the solid earth?
I must not think of mother or the past.

Help me, O God.

[Ghost reappears.]

There, there, O there!

Mother, if that be thee, O tell me so,
For I have woe enough, God knoweth, and
This troubles me.

GHO. Joseph, my dear son!

JOS.—O it is mother, then, my own dear mother.

[Seeks to embrace Ghost, which disappears.]

Gone again! Indeed I must be crazed.

GHOST (in another place) Thou canst not handle the incorporal.

But my dear son, en route near Bethlehem,
Partly from grief at losing thee (since I
Supposed from thy coat gory brought to me
A beast had slain thee), partly from the pangs
Of bringing forth another son, I died:
I, mourning for thee, gave another life,
Whom I supposed would comfort me for thee,

But giving life to him, my spirit broke
Forth from its shattered shell and went to
heaven.

JOS.—Alas, then, thou art dead. How thou art changed!

So young, so beautiful!

GHOST. I am released.

Trouble thou not. My son, our greatest woes
Are on the life side of the stream of death.
But to proceed. When rid of mortal flesh,
Entering the summer land of souls,
I met some spirits, and asked first for thee,
Because thou wert so dear to me in life—

JOS.—Asked first for me; and thou didst think me dead.

GHOST.—And learned that thou wert never seen of them,

And after searching, that thou wert alive.

O then, my son, I had a weary time
Roaming o'er various lands to look for thee,
Made all the more fatiguing from the child
Tender and fair, thy brother, who was left;
Because for love of him I often there
Recurred again, and crooned about the sleep
Of the poor orphan, helpless and so mute,
Fetching and pouring healing balm upon
The wounded heart of Jacob, unaware.
I asked of various angels who had seen
Thee upon different times, and traced thee so,
Finding and nearing thee about the hour
Of thy trial and betrayal.

JOS. O my mother.

GHOST.—Mortals are aided oft by the unseen.

But when my power failed to keep thee from
The prison's confines, then I went to God,
Petitioning His aid, but thus was told:
"Release him now, and thou wilt spoil his
honor.

A man like him must have the burnishing
Of dire affliction, or, advanced to power,
He would be harsh, proud and censorious.
The uncut diamond is a common stone,
While tears on opals makes them pale; so grief
Affects men differently; he is one
Hard usage will make better in the end.
And if he be not down he cannot rise.
Men dig foundations deep for mighty structures.

Remember now his dream about the sheaves."
So, then, thou wert left here for to be schooled;
But I have often been about thee, boy,
And when the baker and the butler dreamed,
I was commissioned by the King, to bear
The revelation of it to thy heart.
But this form that I take dissolveth now.

[Grows indistinct.]

JOS.—Thou art not going, mother? Stay,
O stay.

When thou dost speak I am outside these walls,
Upon my native heath, and there the tent,
Yonder the flocks, just as they used to be.

GHOST.—I may be near thee, but invisible,
And hear thee speak, yet be inaudible.

Joseph—

[beckons.]

Jos. Speak before thou goest.
 GHOST. A little while
 And light shall rise for thee. Farewell.

[Disappears.]

Jos. Gone into viewless air,
 Into incorporate and empty air,
 Faded and gone, as all our hopes do fade.
 And, mother, thou hast entered peace at last,
 And I have a wee brother. O I wish
 That I could see him, that I might return;
 But Leah's cruel children would forbid,
 And these impenetrable walls forbid.
 Help me, Jehovah! help, my fathers' God,
 For I have been afflicted wrongfully,
 And am the son of him whom thou didst bless,
 Saying, to him and to his children's seed.
 For dream, or apparition, or the thought
 Of a diseased mind, this is from Thee,
 To give me comfort in my loneliness.
 I lean on Thee. Let Thy good will be done;
 Except it be done, Thou art not the Lord,
 And so not my will. Lord, forsake me not.

Enter, Jailer.

JAIL.—How dost thou feel this morning,
 Joseph?

Jos.—With thanks, sir, well.

JAIL.—Dost thou not feel a little strange?

Jos.—Strange? yes, sir. But why dost thou
 ask such a question?

JAIL.—Only because—a reason that is no
 reason. I think what is about to occur some-
 times impresses itself on one's mind; that
 friends at a distance can communicate in soul;
 that if one thinks or talks about thee, be he
 never so far away, thou wilt know it by a cer-
 tain warming at the heart, itching of the ear,
 and prickling in the blood—eh?

Jos.—Why, I know not; yet I have felt
 strangely this morning. What has occurred,
 that thou dost speak so?

JAIL.—Joseph, good news! thou art called
 before Pharaoh.

Jos.—Praise God, the ghost.

JAIL.—The what?

Jos.—The strange thing that we spake about.

JAIL.—Say, hast there been a ghost? Ugh!
 Surely, not a ghost here in this prison. By our
 lady, if there's been a ghost here I'll not con-
 sider it polite to confine prisoners here.

Jos.—Nothing, sir, nothing. But tell me,
 how doth it come about that I am to appear
 before Pharaoh?

JAIL.—Thou dost remember, some two
 years ago, two servants of Pharaoh, the chief
 butlar and baker, that were thrown in prison
 for offending his majesty.

Jos.—Remember them? Assuredly. Tell
 me, has the butlar at last spoken of me?

JAIL.—They each dreamed a dream, one
 night, each man something wherein the num-
 ber three figured.

Jos.—I remember it.

JAIL.—And they told thee these dreams
 severally, and thou didst interpret to each of
 them his dream; telling how the chief butlar

was to be released and restored to his place
 and office within three days, and the chief
 baker was, in the same three days, to be taken
 out and hanged for his crime, and be left sus-
 pended where the vultures would devour him.

Jos.—Yes, yes, I know.

JAIL.—All of which came to pass according
 to the tenor of thy interpretation.

Jos.—Surely. Has the butlar remembered
 me to Pharaoh?

JAIL.—When he was restored to his place,
 like so many in prosperity, he forgot all about
 the days of adversity, and thought no more
 of thee—

Jos.—Then it is the ghost.

JAIL.—The what?

Jos.—Nothing.

JAIL.—Thought no more of thee until to-
 day, when a circumstance recalled his dream,
 and, as he thought of thee, and knowing that
 thou didst tell him and the unfortunate baker
 truly, as there was a great cry for anyone who
 could unravel the mysteries of sleep, and none
 other seemed able to do it, then the chief but-
 lar spake of thee to his master Pharaoh; who
 hath commanded me to cause thee to appear
 before his court so soon as thou canst be
 purified and prepared. Thou must have thy
 head and eyebrows shaved, and appear like an
 holy man, or thou wilt not be heard in an holy
 man's cause: the barber and bath await thee.
 Drink with me, sir. Ah, spoken like a holy
 man, who may not drink wine. I saw discreet
 parts in thee, Joseph, and acknowledge I have
 been more of a father to thee than a jailer;
 and I trust thou wilt not make me ashamed of
 thee when thou appearest before Pharaoh.
 But come. The heavenly ruler is so agitated
 by his dream he hath neglected his ambassa-
 dors, his bath, his walk, and will do nothing
 but consult his wise men. [Exeunt, curtain.]

Scene III.—Senate chamber. Pharaoh and
 Court. Enter, Joseph in priestly robes, and
 escort.

PHA.—Peace, lords and priests.

BUT.—Here is the man I told thee of, O
 Pharaoh,

Whose wisdom did forecast me.

PHA. Let him speak.

Jos.—Before thy majesty I bow the knee.

Health and long life, most gracious of man-
 kind,

Lent of the heavens to lead the world aright.

PHA.—Stand up, thou mortal to whom
 speak'st the gods.

I had a dream upon my bek at night,
 Wherein the gods revealed themselves in signs,
 And I have gathered my magicians here,
 My wise men and astrologers, from out
 My realms from the sea to the Nile's source,
 But none of them could show me what it
 meant;

When came my butlar, saying thou didst tell
Him and my baker truly of their dreams,
As proven afterward, divining well
By potent god new to us: for which cause
I sent for thee to know if it be so.
Now, therefore, teach thou understand the
dream,

And read me what the gods would say to me?

Jos.—The knowledge of these things is not
with me,

But in the heart of Him above all flesh;
Howbeit, God shall answer thee in peace,
According to the word of this young man,
Whom I do thank for his remembrance.

PHA.—Then hear the dream. I stood upon
the bank

Of Nile, the mightiest river in the word,
And in a mist, as from the water's midst,
Came and appeared upon the grassy bank
Seven fat kine, well-favored and full-fleshed
And fed upon the meadow sward near by.
And after them came seven other kine
From out the river, but the last were lank,
Lean and ill-favored, such as I have not seen
In all the land of Egypt; but they ate,
Devouring up the seven goodly kine,
Nor after that appeared increased in flesh,
But were ill-favored as they were at first:
And as I looked, the meadow disappeared.
So I awoke and pondered on the dream.
But then a second time I fell asleep,
And lo; a stool of corn; and seven ears
Came up from it, all full and very good,
So that the heads hung downward from their
weight:

But after them, behold! another stool,
Bearing its seven stalks of blasted ears,
All thin and swiveled by the eastern wind;
And the thin ears devoured the good ears:
When therefore the good ears had disappeared,
I turned to look upon the shriveled ears,
And they were not increased, but meagre yet.

Jos.—The dreams of Pharaoh are one;
and God

Hath shown to Pharaoh what shall shortly be.
The seven favored kine are seven years;
The seven good ears, too, are seven years:
The dreams are one. Also the seven kine
Lank and ill-favored, they are seven years;
And seven years the seven blasted ears.
What God will do He tells to Pharaoh.
There shall come first a seven years of plenty.
Throughout the entire length and breadth of
Egypt;

And after them rise seven other years
Of famine and distress, so that the plenty
Shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt;
So grievous it, it shall consume the land.
And as the kine came from the Nile, so shall
Plenty and famine both come out of it,
According as the flood is great or small.
Of this God warneth Pharaoh in dreams;
And for that it was doubled to him, twice,
The thing is certain and shall shortly be.
Now therefore, let not Pharaoh take offence,

But let him find a man discreet and wise,
And set him over the great land of Egypt:
Let him appoint him under officers
To take up a fifth part of what is raised
The seven plenteous years, and keep in bins,
Gathering it together in great store
Within the cities where the people trade:
Which food shall be reserve against the years
Of want and famine that shall follow these,
That Egypt may not suffer in those years
Neither the people die for lack of food.

PHA.—Much doth thy word commend itself
to us.

What think you, judges, wise men and astrol-
ogers,

Priests, counsellors and Pharaoh's favorites?

[Chief justice, priests and astrologers hold a
consultation in pantomime.]

C. J.—Great sovereign, grant me lief to
question him.

PHA.—Say on.

C. J. Priest of this new religion,
There may be many gods we know not of,
But it is well to ask thee of thyself.

Who art thou? what hast thou to say to us?

Jos.—Most reverend sir, of this new God,
not new,

Whom I serve, thus doth great Hermes speak:
"What is truth, though we sing praise to it?

Or what is good, though it is sung in praise?

O All, receive the homage of all things.

"Thou art true God." As for myself, I am

The slave of Pharaoh, and son of Abraham,

Who one time was a scholar in this land

Of some repute.

C. J. Art thou of Abraham?

O Pharaoh, Lords and Wise Men, I have found

This youth the son of a most ripened scholar.

Who, as the records show, was much esteemed

By the wise fathers of thy Majesty,

Who strait enjoined no disrespect to him

Or to his God. As for the dream, I find

The gods do often speak by sevens. The stars

Of Pleiades are seven, and they herein

Are honored by four sevens. And to the books,

Numbers in dreams refer to days or years.

Want, too, and plenty rise up from the Nile,

Whence in the dream the fourteen cattle came.

The youth and word commend themselves,

my liege,

Nor would I find fault, lest I should be wrong.

PHA.—It pleaseth me to hoard a portion up,

Whether the famine come as he hath said,

Or whether he hath misinterpreted:

So is his counsel good in either case.

What is thy name?

Jos. My name is Joseph.

I am a Hebrew, my most gracious liege.

PHA.—No, not Hebrew now; thou art

Egyptian;

And thy name shall be Zaphnath-Paaneah.

Son, forasmuch as god hath showed thee this,

When all the old astrologers are dumb,

There is none found discreet and wise as thou,

For since the gods are with thee, where thou art

Must be prosperity. Now at thy word
My people shall be led as thou hast said,
And thou shalt gather a fifth part each year,
So long as plenty smileth on our land,
To store in cities 'gainst a day of want.
Cousin, we hand thee here the royal ring
In token of our word, and put this chain
About thy neck; give thee the lower palace,
And shall give thee to wife the one thou choose
Of the lords' daughters. Lords, we are Pharaoh.

Without him shall no man lift up his hand
In any project throughout all the land.

[Acclamation by the lords.]

Clothe him in linen vestments as his state,
And let him ride in mine own chariot,
While ye proclaim before him, Bow the knee.
[Curtain,

SCENE IV.—Feast in Pharaoh's palace. Pharaoh on throne in background, surrounded by lords and ladies; tables in remote background. Before Pharaoh, juggling and dancing. Enter, Zaphnath-Paaneah and Asenath in foreground.

ZAPH.—Lady, it seems like I have known thee years.

ASEN.—I'm sorry thou dost think so ill of me,

For I must be poor company, if these
Five minutes thou hast spent with me seem years.

Jos.—Not that, but for real years I have known one

Ideally a woman, so and so,
So far ideal I had never met her,
Till in thy ways and mein and lineaments
I trace the outlines of ideal friend.

ASEN.—Then thou dost honor me to call me friend,

And term the friendship old; for it is said,
Bush in old wine, comfort in an old shoe,
Reliance in an old friend: so be it.
But women like not to be called very old.

Jos.—Suppose I say we have been friends two years:

No woman will disclaim an age like that:
And having known thee thus long, I will not
Seem all a stranger suing for thy hand,
And so—

ASEN.—O there is cousin Zeleika!
Thou must meet her.

Jos. Yea, but just now
I have no time but to converse with thee.
And being friends, I urge old friendship's claim.

ASEN.—Thou shouldst meet Potaphar, the General;

My cousin, sir. He is a great man, sir.
Men in the public gaze are statues high
On pedestal where if they stir they fall.
It takes cool heads to stand at their great height.

Jos.—Much have I heard his greatness high extolled.

But hath thy heart been given to a man?

ASEN.—Why, no, my lord, I still have need of it,

And why should I give my heart to a man?

Jos.—Then, lady, hear me for my passion's sake.

ASEN.—My lord, thou speakest louder than thou ought.

Jos.—Since I beheld thee, I, who never loved
A woman save my mother, feel thy charms
As if a strong chain bound around my heart
And drawing me to thee, fair Asenath.

Tell me that I may hope.

ASEN. I hope all men may hope.

Jos.—May I ask Pharaoh to give thee to me?

ASEN.—Thou hast a tongue and mayest ask anything,

But I think thou shouldst ask me for the gift
Before thou dost another.

Jos. I know not how to court,
Yet do thou take what should be said, as said,
And answer me that thou wilt be my wife.

ASEN.—True maids mock not an awkwardness in love,

But would prefer it show apprentice-work;
And I am equally as new as thou,
And know not how to answer, save, I love thee.
[Curtain.

ACT IV.

INTRODUCTION.—Enter, Famine, mumbling a bone.

Vulture of the earth am I,
Tearing the human family,
Gorging much in every age,
Powerless to my lust assuage,
Though I glut 'mid battle roar,
Or upon the filthy poor
Lying cooped in rags and cold
Ready for my fangs to hold. [Gnaws.

But I hear interrogation
Of the pertinent occasion
In Egypt land, in Joseph's day;
Was I present then? you say.
Yea, and I for seven years
Blasted harvests, munched the ears,
And hollowed grain as it was planted—
I alone had all I wanted. [Gnaws.

And the poet bids me take
The roll of musty days, and break,
As ye have the rock inclosures
Where many a mummied king reposes,
Reading from the roll as though
Present was the long ago. [Reads.

So: Asenath, wedded wife,
Hath for two sons nourished life
By Zaphnath-Paaneah, he
Over Egypt's husbandry:
Seven years of grace have past;
Each, more bounteous than the last,

Hath bestrewed the land with grain,
Which they strive to reap in vain,
But Zaphnath, sending servants forth,
Hath garnered all the waste of earth,
At a trifling value paid,
Piling barns and graneries wide.
So the fruit was hoarded high
When from out my dungeon I,
Bound by Titans since the flood,
By the river famished stood;
And two seasons I have fed
Wheresoe'er my fancy led,
Yet am empty. Now the land
Is fed from Zaphnath-paaneah's hand,
From the bins he filled before;
And he reaps a golden store. [Gnaws.
Eleven years from the baker's doom
The poet will his tale resume. [Exit.

SCENE I.—Plains of Canaan. Israel (very feeble), and sons.

ISR.—Why look ye angrily upon each other?
Hath want turned you into a jealous horde,
That ye with scowls shoot arrows from the tongue.

Toward the vital heart? Such arrows stick,
Rankle and fester, till they do much ill.

JUD.—Better be dead than lacking what we need.

ISR.—Courage, my children. God hath promised us

A kingdom—

JUD.—Fagh! we have a kingdom now,
And starve in it.

ISR? Son, I am thy father.

God hath a kingdom promised us, my sons,
Flowing with milk and honey; be assured
He will give us this kingdom. To do that
He must preserve our lives; and be ye warned,
This famine shall not gnaw us like these looks.
Nursing pent feelings is a dangerous thing
At the eruption. So: hold back your heads,
Look squarely at the world, not surly down,
Or it like a wild beast will pounce on you.
A caravan is coming. I will hail them,
And will divide our crust with them: if we
Divide with poor, God will divide with us.

[Exit, followed by Dan.

JUD.—Best eat the crust, and then curse
God and die.

SIM.—Judah, thou hast not seemed right
since thou didst sell Joseph. It is that, and
not the famine that troubles thee.

JUD.—I'd like to see anything save an ache
or pain of thine own trouble thee.

SIM.—It must be terrible to have such guilt.

JUD.—Such guilt indeed! how terrible, thou
—what shall I call thee?—

SIM.—Brother, perhaps.

JUD.—Thou hast not only slain Joseph, but
thy own self as well. Thou art too dead in
evil to have any feeling. Thou and Levi art
guilty of this and of Shechem's—

SIM.—Righteous instruments, my brother.

JUD.—Ask Dinah as to that.

LEVI.—'T was Simeon set the whole of us
agog.

SIM.—And that's a lie. Thou know'st all
action hangs

Upon the first-born: Reuben was the leader.

SIM.—O thou dost know I hid the lad away.

REU.—I know that thou didst curse him:
so do these.

REU.—Why, I was not there when ye sold
the lad.

LEVI.—'T was Simeon's work. He acted as
first-born.

SIM.—How thou canst lie, as well as sell
thy brother!

By heaven, thou liest near as well as Judah,—
Though he outfigured thee in selling Joseph.

JUD.—I plead for Joseph, and I will not lie
Under this weight of obloquy. By heaven!—

[Re-enter, Dan.

DAN.—It is Haran, brothers! Haran, Haran,
Haran.

JUD.—To hell with Haran! Who is Haran,
Dan?

DAN.—I knew him when I set my eyes on
him,

Though he is older, and could swear 't is he.

JUD.—Of course 't is he; but tell us, who
is he.

DAN.—Haran, the man to whom we sold
our brother.

JUD.—Art sure?

DAN.—Yea, positive.

JUD.—Did he see thee?

DAN.—No; if he had, and known me, he
had spoke

About the slave he bought, and father then

Had plied with questions, and all would have
slipped.

Trust me for that much wisdom. . . They are
gone.

I crept up unobserved by anyone. [Re-enter, ISR

ISR.—They are of Ishmael, slave merchant-
men,

And tell a wondrous story. Years ago,
They say, a wise man went to Pharaoh,
Declaring of this famine, how, in time,
This angel should appear and reap the earth,
And recommended that his Majesty
Gather the surplus of his land, and store
Against the evil: this did Pharaoh,
Appointing the wise youth to glean the fields;
And then for seven years, as well we know,
The genial earth, impregnated by the sun,
Brought forth abundantly; the which they
saved

And stored away, where we but wasted it;

So that they have enough to feed their all.

DAN.—Is this all?

ISR.—It may mean much to us.

For seven years the famine is to last.

DAN.—Is this all, father?

ISR.—Son, it is enough.
Be thankful to the Lord it is this much.

It may be means whereby to save our lives,
For if we tell the man of our distress
He may be pitiful and sell us corn.

JUD.---I shall try him.

LEVI And I.

SIM. And I.

ISR. Do so, my sons.

[Exeunt and curtain.]

SCENE II. — Custom house at Thebes.
Zaphnath-Paaneah and officers.

ZAPH.---Steward.

STE.---My lord.

ZAPH.---It is evident that money fails among the people. Therefore send thou runners to all officers in the forty-two nomes, saying: When the people come to buy, if they say they have no money, ask them what cattle they have, and give them the grain in exchange for their cattle, herds and flocks. Cattle are an incumbrance on the people without food to give them, and are already too reduced in flesh to make them meat.

STE.---Yes, my lord.

ZAPH.---Charge them to allow fair prices, but no more; for then the cattle shall be on our charge. Have the herds and flocks sent for the present to Ramses' land for pasturing. Send, meantime, searchers for new pasture-fields, to oases in the desert. and far up the Nile.

[Enter, boy.]

STE.---It shall be so, my lord.

ZAPH.---Have also the officers of every province to send us report of their transactions, and the money they have received for grain. My boy, what is it?

BOY.---Please, sir, and there are some Hebrews come down from Canaan to buy corn.

ZAPH.---Hebrews! Bring them in; I wish to question them. [Exit, boy.] Some foreigners are coming, steward. Keep them waiting at the arras, and when they speak, bear what they say to me, and take them my answer. Dost thou understand?

STE.---I do, my lord.

Exit, Zaph. behind the arras. Enter, Judah et. al. Throughout the following conversation the steward hears messages, walks to the arras, converses in pantomime, and brings back his master's instructions.

JUD.---Our master, Zaphnath-Paaneah, called us in.

SIM.---He will not see you, but would learn your mission.

JUD.---Commend our worship to my lord. We dwell in Canaan, where, too, the famine hath eaten the earth, yet there far worse than here; For we, unwarned, have nothing hoarded by. As ye have here; for we lacked bee's wisdom Who lay by for their need. We've heard the famine

Of our good lord who sits next Pharaoh,
And how his wisdom hath outwitted death
In snatching life from hungry famine's jaws.
Also, we hear he hath enough laid up,
Not only for his people, but to spare,
And we are come to buy; and we entreat,
Turn us not empty from your hoarded barns,
For if ye do, we starve.

STE.---My master says, Nay, ye are spies: to spy the nakedness Of Egypt are ye come, intending then To bring forth warriors on our helplessness.

JUD.---Nay, tell my lord That we are true men; and ourselves in want, Have heard how you are full, and come to you; Sixty and six souls, counting our wives and babes,

Praying to be sheltered in your shadow. We all are sons of one man, and are true. Ask him if spies be all one family.

STE.---My master thinks ye spies, and will not sell.

Howbeit, he bids ask if ye have other brother. JUD.---We all are sons of one, and he is old: And there are twelve of us; but one is dead, And one, a mere child, tarried with his father.

STE.---Thus saith my master: That it is indeed

As I have said, and ye are spies, not brethren, Ye shall be proven. By the life of Pharaoh, Ye shall not all depart until you bring This younger brother that ye tell me of. Send one of you to bring him, and the rest Shall lie in prison till he hath been brought.

JUD. (aside) My God! what shall we do?

NAPH. (aside) God tarries in his judgment, not forgets,

But metes it to the plummets and the square. This cometh of our selling Joseph, when He plead with us; but we would not regard, And now will God not hear us, tho' we plead.

REU. (aside) God knoweth what our brother hath endured, And He will make us each one bear the same.

ASH. (aside) To Egypt sold we him; in Egypt comes

His angel in avengement on us.

ZEB. (aside) Had we been wise we never had come here.

NAPH. (aside) God meant we should come, to receive our doom,

And there is no man that can say Him nay.

REU. (aside) I feared this evil, and I hid the lad;

And yet you pout the lip out at my speech.

SIM. (aside) Thou didst not take thy portion, O no, no.

REU. (aside) You would not hear me, and our sorrow came.

DAN.---Fie! quarrel not so before this gentlemen,

Bickering as if strangers and not brothers. There is a way. Sir, I would speak with thee. Go, tell thy master we are loyal men, And what was said is true; but we have wives

And little ones, and aged parents, who
Require the food to keep them from the grave;
Nor can one bear what all their needs demand.
Pray him, therefore, to take out one of us,
And keep him as a hostage in the dungeon,
But send the others, with their corn, away.
To bring the brother that we tell thee of.

STEW.—My master will not hear but ye are spies,
And one may volunteer to die for the others.

DAN.—Tell him to choose one. Would all volunteer,

Were we not brethren, as we say we are?
Yea, some must starve if nine cannot return.
Ask him, if he doth reverence the gods,
To pity us.

STEW. My master bids me say,
He doth fear God, and will accede your terms.
Ho, fellows! [Slaves appear.] Didst thou
say thou wouldst stay?

DAN.—I will, if it doth please my lord.
STEW.—Our master tells you to bind fast
this man, [Indicating Simeon]
And cast him in the prison. [They sieze him.]

SIM.—Let go, off, off! Help, some of you!
Am I to be taken and put in prison at the in-
stance of Dan?—here, let loose!—and against
my will? Now this doth shame the wrong ye
did to Joseph. I'll remember you for this.

[They bear him away.]
DAN.—Well, this is wonderful.

RHU.—The deed of God. It was Simeon
who was most bitter against Joseph, and now
the trouble doth recoil on him. God knoweth
who is guilty.

JUD.—Who is not guilty? let us be careful
how we censure others.

STEW.—Sirs, ye may go, and take the food
ye want.

There at the side your vessels will be filled.

[Exit, Judah, et. al., silently. Enter, Zaph.]

ZAPH.—Steward.

STEW.—My lord.

ZAPH.—Receive their money from them, yet
when they know not, restore every man his
money in his sack.

STEW.—It shall be so, my lord.
[Exeunt and curtain.]

SCENE III.—Plains of Canaan. Tent. Is-
rael and sons.

ISR.—Now that the greetings have been
given, and slaves

Are storing and unloading food ye brought,
Let us repair unto the tent and talk.

[Exit, Isr., Judah, Levi and Dan, in the tent.
Enter, Benjamin.]

BEN.—O are ye back? I wish I could have
gone.

Ye must have seen great sights.

ZEB. Brothers, we did.

O Egypt is a wondrous country, brother.

Such building as they have! their massive
piles

Surely eclipse the famous tower of Babel.

Their marble tombs o'ertop our Gerezim.

How they have raised the heavy building stone,
Dragging the cubes and blocks from head of
Nile,

Surpasses my conjecture. They are great,
Ruling the eastern half of Africa,
And barbarous people dwelling by the lakes,
Approached through grass high as a horses'
back,

Of whom we have no cognizance. They have
Tackles and rigging that is wonderful,
Enabling one man to do fifty's work.

They daub the creases with concreted mortar,
That turns to solid stone.

BEN. O not to stone.

ZEB.—To stone, so that thou canst not tell
where joints

Are made in it, but all seems one cut block.

ASH.—Benjamin, the pyramids

Are acres huge, and high as twenty trees

Hollowed, and filled with strange appliances

For mirrowing and bringing near the stars.

And various mysteries of alchemy.

NAPH.—And there's a goddess carved from
mountain rock,

With head and breast of woman, lion body,
Couched on hind feet; large enough for priests
To offer sacrifice between the paws,
There worshipping.

BEN. That must be wonderful.

The incense from the burning altar fires
Ascends and fills her nostrils, that appear
Like chimnies on her face.

BEN.

O how strange!

GAD.—At Thebes' eastern gate great Mem-
non stands,

Straddling the passage way: he is as high
As ten ship masts, and sees the sun arise
Upon the eastern ocean. Men behold
Its brow diffused in light, when all below
Is darkness; and when the sun dips from the
spray,

The statue then is vocal as the birds,
Which they do fable have learned song from it.

BEN.—What! doth stone sing?

GAD. Yea, it is musical:
Strike flint against a flint, and thou wilt see.
All things are musical.

ISSA.

At Isambul

They tell us of great quarries, and a mountain
Carved into temples and to images,
With entrances through doors between the feet
Of sitting statues, and apartments there
Could swallow yonder hill; upon the lap
Of every one can stand a thousand men.

BEN.—O I would like to go.

ASH.

And thou canst.

The ruler of the people asked for thee,
And made us promise to bring thee along.

BEN.—How did he hear of me?

ASH.

We told him, lad.

[Re-enter, Isr. and Judah.]

JUD.—Zaphnath-Paaneah, since the famine came,
And selling food hath filled the kingly purse,
Hath set the idle husbandmen to work,
Making conduits, aqueducts, canals,
For irrigating all land tillable,
By which he hopes, through making water-ways
From ocean, under ground, thro' all the land,
He will make e'en the desert arable,
Precluding such another dearth as this.
ISR.—The growth of ideas is astonishing,
And will o'erwhelm and upturn the world.

[Enter, Leah.

LEAH—I see not Simeon; where is he, sons?

ASH.—Simeon? he 's in— O nothing, mother.

LEAH—Where didst thou say he was?

ASH.—Well—in prison.

ISR.—My son in prison? what means this? speak!

JUD.—It is small matter, do not be alarmed.
The man in charge of Egypt's graneries
Refused to sell to us, said we were spies
Come from a power to note their salient points;
And when, refuting, we said we were brethren,
He asked if we had other brother; we said,
One;

Then he did sell us food, and bade us go,
Detaining Simeon till we come again,
And bring him Benjamin to prove us true.

ISR.—To send to you or by you, then, is fatal.

Joseph is not, and Simeon is not,
And now you would take Benjamin away.

JUD.—On Egypt's honor, Simeon is safe.

ISR.—What need had ye to speak of Benjamin?

JUD.—Could we know he would bid us bring the lad

When he inquired, Have ye other brother?

ISR.—O Rachel, thou and thy sons are abused,

And thou art dead, and no one takes their part.

LEAH—Now, husband, this is wrong, and is not true.

I have been mother to my sister's son,
And as for Joseph, what know they of him?

'T was Rachel's fault, and thy fault, and not theirs,

Because ye sent him to the wilderness,
Where wild beasts prowl and fain would light on him.

How can their father call them murderers?

ISR.—What dost thou know of grief?

LEAH.—What do I know?

Didst thou bear Simeon? Is he not mine?
Now, where is thy trust in God, my husband?
Erstwhile thou called me cold, and said I lacked

The zeal of worship that I ought to have,
Yet I can trust in God to mend this thing,
And thou art raging. Now, believe thy sons.
Thou gavest both Rachel's children gorgeous cloaks,

And humorest them, yet I have borne with thee,
But my sons thou dost chide, do what they may;
And question when they tell us he is safe.
I do believe that Simeon is safe.

The man could not know but our sons were spies,

And ought to have a sign; and when thou send
The brother him, attesting what they said,
He will release his hostage, Simeon,
And send them all back safely to our land.

DAN.—But for my words, he'd kept us all, save one.

REU.—The man required but security,
And will not harm one of us.

ISR.—But Benjamin

Shall not go.

BEN.—Please, father, let me go; I want to go.
The king sent for me, father.

ISR.—He is a child.

LEAH.—But he doth want to go.

Wilt thou leave Simeon in his despair?

ISR.—I must take care of Rachel's only son,
Now she is dead.

JUD.—'T is either go or starve,
When this shall fail; and go, or Simeon dies.
I'll pledge my life and all for Benjamin.

DAN.—Besides, when we were lodging at the inn,

We found our money tied in each man's sack,
And it is go or forfeit honesty
Before the man.

ISR.—How wiley is the man!

It is a trick, and Simeon is not,
And he would call away my little lad
To sell him into slavery. O sons—

BEN.—I'm not afraid: please, father, let me go.

ISR.—Thou art a child.

LEVI.—We might harangue all day
And not convince our father: let us go.
Some men think them so higher than all else
Their own thoughts only have a feather's weight.

ISR.—And thus it goes, and we know not what next,

Save that some thorn doth prick us every step,
As we race for our lives and end in death.

Yet come what will, fate tells me they must go.
[Exit and curtain.

SCENE IV.—Custom house in Thebes.
Zaphnath-Paaneah and officers. Enter, ten Israelites.

STEW.—Welcome, ye Hebrews. As ye entered here

My master saw the lad of whom ye spake,
Discerning him from his resemblance to you,
And knew ye were true men. Now, as he hath
Detained your brother in the prison house,
(He is already sent for) he will do
What reparation seemeth meet. Ye are
To dine with him to-day in his own house.

[They hold a whispered consultation.

DAN (aside) What shall we do? This man
Is noted for his subtlety, and weaves
His web thus.

REU. (aside) Dost thou think so?

DAN (aside) 'T is like enough.
This follows with the coins put in our sacks.
Best tell his steward now.

JUD. O sir,
We came indeed the first time to buy corn,
And are true men, our hearts upon our words;
But when we opened up our sacks, behold
We found the money that we brought returned,
And we convey it back to you again,
With other money also, to buy food.
We cannot tell who put it in our sacks,
And pray thee not to hold us for the deed.

STEW.—Peace be to you, fear not; I had
your money:
Your god saw your distress and gave you
treasure.

But shall I tell my master you accept?
I did not catch the drift of what you said.

JUD.—Thy pardon, sir. Our worship to our
lord,
And our compliments bear thou to him;
And though unworthy e'en to see his face,
We'll not refuse this honor of a lifetime.

[Enter, Simeon, escorted.]

STEW.—Here is your brother safe returned
to you.

DAN.—Good morrow, Simeon.

SIM.—I'll good morrow thee.

[Assays to strike Dan, but is restrained.]

Leave loose here! O thou hidden viper,
Burying thy designs so thou canst wound.
Hands off, I say.

JUD. Peace, Simeon.
Hast thou no manners in the land of Egypt?

SIM.—Damn Egypt! Egypt's a prison
house.

That's all I know of Egypt.

JUD. Brother!—

STEW. Sir,
My master would repair the wrong he did
thee,

By having thee to dine with him this day;
And since your god hath given you this
money

(Perhaps he meant it for the selfsame purpose)
Why not pour it upon your brother's wound?

JUD.—I am content, if it be not my lord's.

STEW.—Then take the treasure coming to
them strange,
And mayest thou live to see much good in
Egypt.

SIM.—Pardon me, sir. I am hot-headed, sir,
But yet my master did but what was right.
I pray thee, tell him not what I have said.

STEW. (to serv.) Conduct them to the pal-
ace, bathe their feet,
And give them change of raiment while they
wait.

The peace of Egypt be upon you, sirs.

[Exeunt and curtain.]

SCENE V.—Room in Zaphnath-Paaneah's
house, with presents for the host displayed.
Eleven brethren. Enter, Zaphnath-Paaneah,
who receives homage.

JUD.—My lord, thy fame, like delicate per-
fume

From violets wafted on the humid air,
Hath spread to Canaan where the drouth
prevails,

And filled it with the hope of better things.
My lord, take it not in unkindness, pray,
But our father, whom we told thee of,
Hath sent thee a small present, yet the best
Our famished land can yield: a little balm,
Honey, my lord, spices and myrrh, nuts and
almonds.

Take not offense, but know we are true men.

ZAPH.—Up—be of cheer! Your presents,
rare and fine,

Dainties, and loved by us, reveal your souls
Spotless of taint, as I have found already,
And I receive them very gratefully.

I much regret how I have treated you.

SIM.—'T was wisdom, and let not my lord
feel grieved.

ZAPH. (slapping his hands) How is your
father that ye told me of,

That aged man whose hairs are ripened sheaves
Of wisdom? (Servant appears.) Bring thou
my wife and sons,

And set the viands now before my guests.

[Exit, servant.]

JUD.—Thy servant, our father, he is well,
my lord.

ZAPH.—Is this the youngest brother that
ye spake of?

JUD.—It is, my lord.

ZAPH. God be with thee, son.

[Enter, Asenath, Manasseh and Ephraim.]

This is my wife; my two sons are these lads,
Companions for the time with this one here.

Wife, wilt thou serve us, honoring so these
guests? [Exit, Asenath.]

Manasseh, Ephraim, both of you serve him.

[Indicates Benj. Exit, Man. and Eph.]

Do my friends find pleasure in the sounds of
harps?

BENJ.—O yes, sir, yes, indeed.

JUD. Pardon our brother.

He is a child, my lord, and speaks unthought.

ZAPH.—Would all spake from the heart,
not all from lips.

Our music must seem stiff, constrained to you
Who breathe the open air and sing in heaven.
Yet song is universal speech, I think,
Linking the whole world into harmony.

[Servants enter, who cause all to recline on
divans in order of birth, with Zaph. apart
from the others. Soft music without. Asen-
ath and servants bring in platters and trays,
present them to Zaph., who, spreading his
hands over them, blesses them; then they
are set before the guests. Man. and Eph.]

similarly wait on Benj., thus giving him a double portion of all things.

LEVI—Pardon, my lord, but Reuben is the eldest.

ZAPH.—So I divined, and put him at the head;

But my charms tell me it is customary
To give the youngest double portion in your tribe.

These shark's fins, and this jelly-fish,
Are reckoned delicacies with us,
But, being new to you, I fear their flavor
Will give offense. Bring them some oysters,
wife,

And turtle; can you eat an ostrich egg?
Thinking your native fare might suit your taste,
I here have mutton, which I hope will not
Seem less sweet from the place where it was
slain—

For it was consecrated in the square.
Before the image of th' incarnate god
In th' bull, Osiris.

JUD. Pardon us, my lord;
'T is not our custom to eat such.

ZAPH. Bear it away.
Try now this argus; or do you wish fruits?
Then here are citrons, dates and oranges.
How like ye Egypt, sirs?

JUN.—Egypt is queen of every country, sir;
Her crown is Thebes, whose two-hundred gates
Sparkle all sides like amethysts in light.
Your splendid building, statues sprinkled thick,
Especially adown the Avenue,
Are wonderful. So much we do admire
Our tongues are powerless to speak their praise.

ZAPH.—'T is a great city.

ASH. Would my father saw it.

ZAPH.—Is he old?

ASH. White as the desert sands.

ZAPH.—Drink to your father, who hath
given life

From his own body to your joys and hopes
Lodged in your hearts: and reverence your
sire. [They drink.]

REU.—What wine is this! as ancients and
as good

As legends of the ancients.

Servant enters, bearing a skeleton, with a papyrus roll in its hand; taking and unfolding the roll, the servant recites:

Take the roll from out death's hand,
Read his thoughts, and understand.

I was once as ye are, ye

As I am shall shortly be.

Quaff ye wine—it moves, it lives;

Quaff ye wine—a wound it gives;

There is life in death, and death

Issuing with your every breath.

Now proceed, and eat, and drink,

Not as beasts, but learn to think. [Exit.]

ZAPH.—Drink to your mothers. God hath
given man

No truer, better friend than his own mother.

Some mothers are on earth, and some in
heaved,

But those on earth make heaven for a man,
While leaving him for heaven turns earth
hell. [They drink.]

DAN (aside) Didst notice how he used the
plural, mothers?

That man can see to Canaan in that cup,
And read the very secrets of our lives.

GAD (aside) Speak not so loud.

DAN (aside) Why, he can hear our thoughts.

ZAPH.—Drink to the dead with silence and
a prayer;

That when they bear us down the Avenue
Lined thickly with immortals and the gods,
To cross the Sacred Pool, awhile the priest
Doth sprinkle us, and people scatter palms,
The forty and two judges may decide
Us worthy of interment, and pronounce
High eulogies, and the grim boatman bear
Our bodies to their endless resting place
Deep in the rocky breast of mother earth,
And that our hearts may tip the scales aright.
O may we wisely thread life's Labyrinth.
Drink to the dead with silence and a prayer.
[As they drink, curtain.]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—Outside the gate of Thebes. Caravan of Israelites. Enter, messenger from Zaphnath-Paaneah.

MES.—Ho, stop ye, stay!

JUD.—What wilt thou, sir?

MES.—Is this the gratitude you show my
master,

Who entertained you and hath sold you food
Whereon your lives and happiness depend?
Ungrateful men, you pull disaster on you.

JUD.—We know not what thou meanest.

MES. Know not, sir?

So speak all men while seeking to enmantle
The wolf in the white garment of the lamb.
We'll show you what we mean. 'Ye have the
cup,

The magic cup by which my lord divines,
The gift of Pharaoh, which ye have stolen.
Wist not that such as my lord can divine?

JUD.—Come, search our stuff, and if thou
findest it,

Then we will be the servants of our lord,
And he who hath it shall be put to death.

MES.—We'll search and see.

[Opens Reuben's sack.]

REU.—Am I a thief? [Opens Simeon's.]

SIM.—What right hast thou? Leave honest
folks alone.

I have been shamefully misused by him.

And he seeks more occasion. [Opens Levi's.]

LEVI Thou'rt in thy cups,
Or thou wouldst not seek cups of Leah's sons.

Go thou to Benjamin, who is that stock.

[Opens Judah's.

JUD.—Look through them all; an honest man is open

To scrutiny of all, and loves the light;
But thieves and mean men covet secrecy.

[Opens Dan's.

DAN.—We thus shall prove we take no money back. [Opens Naphtali's.

NAPH.—What! is it empty? [Opens Gad's.

GAD.—Best dig the grain. [Opens Asher's.

ASH.—Thou searchest for our innocence, and findest. Opens Zebulun's.

MES.—The rest have spoken; what hast thou to say?

ZEB.—Just what thou'lt find, sir, in my sack.

MES. And that?

ZEB.—Nothing, sir.

[Open Benjamin's, finding cup.

LEVI What did I tell you?

I never knew a pretty woman's son,
Or one luxurious, who came to much.

BENJ.—O brothers, help me! Now what shall I do?

Sir, I unvail my breast—I did not know;
I cannot tell how it came in my sack.

MES.—Sirs, we no further would unsettle you;

Return ye to your land. This child alone
We hold amenable.

JUD. (rending his garment) We will not go,
But we will bear the burden of our brother.

[Exeunt toward 'I hebes.

SCENE II—Custom house in Thebes. Benjamin in custody and other Israelites before Zaphnath-Paaneah.

ZAPH.—And so you found the cup with him?

MES. My lord,

We did, in sack of this the youngest one.

ZAPH.—Then hold him culpable let others go.

JUD.—My lord, I pray thee, listen to my plea.

ZAPH.—Say on.

JUD.—We came first in distress to buy us corn,

Leaving our parents, wives and little ones,
And thou didst (for so it seemed good in thy sight)

Detain our brother Simeon from his babes
Until we brought this lad. Our sire, sir,
Hath two wives, and we ten are of the one,
But Rachel, whom he loved, bore only one:
Her elder-born was torn apart by beasts,
And she kept pining in our father's sight
Until this child was born, then passed away;
And thou dost see he is a little child,
Having no mother to direct his steps,
And if he slipped upon the city's ways,
All new to him, take pity for the child
Who had no mother's training.

My lord, I now recall thy toast where thou didst say,

A mother leaving earth for heaven leaves earth hell

For children that remain: consider, then
The hell in which this little child hath walked,
And let that be his punishment.

My lord, it may be thou (bereavement takes
Unwelcome board with every man, both high
And low) wast in thy early days bereft
Of mother's guidance; or if not so
Consider, I do pray thee, if thy child
(But heaven defend thine from such fate) had
been

From babyhood without a mother's care,
And he perchance had made this slip.
Now, the aged man, our father, who doth stand
Over the tomb, doth dote upon this child,
Since he was born just as his mother passed,
Their spirits meeting on the mystic way,
And would not send him even for his son,
To ransom him, nor for our urgent need,
And all the hunger of our little ones,
Until I pledged my own life for the child,
Security that he should be returned;
And if we go without this little one,
Then will our father die.

O sir, he is a child, nor knows his sin:
Therefore, I pray thee, let him go with them,
And keep me in his stead, to bear his guilt,
And I will be thy slave through all my days.

ZAPH.—Officer, put every man from out
the room,
Save these alone, and lock the doors.

[Ejectment takes place.

O Judah, Judah, thou hast nobly said.
I am your brother Joseph, whom ye sold,
O brethren, it is true, believe in me;
Be not so cold, nor fear me; draw to me;
For I have yearned toward you from the first.
My brother Benjamin, thou art as I,
Beloved, but motherless; thou hast not seen
The dear face of our mother evermore;
But I have seen her; for her spirit came
To me in prison, and told me of thee,
Even before I learned of thee from these.

[They kiss and embrace Zaphnath-Paaneah,
successively, as he calls their names.]

Reuben, thou didst not mean a wrong to me,
For thou didst hide me.

RU, O my brother,
But I was guilty; yet forgive me, pray.

ZAPH.—Peace be to thee. Simeon, forgive
My putting thee to jail.

SIM. Forgive my sin.
There is no evil except jealousy.

ZAPH.—Peace, peace, my brother. Levi,
peace to thee.

LEVI—Praise be to God.

ZAPH. Noble, noble Judah;
Who gives his all for others hides his sins.
Peace, brother Naphtali, and Dan—
Gad—Asher: praise the Lord! and Isaac har;
Peace, Zebulun. The world is glad to-day,

And heaven draws the burdens from men's hearts.

Giving the reconciling kiss to all.
I think I never saw so bright a day.
Is it not bright?

JUD. O how we wronged thee, brother!

ZAPH.—Nay, charge yourselves not with this weight of grief

Because you sold me, for it was of God,
And I was sent here to preserve your lives
During the famine; for the High One works
Mysteriously, and yet he rules mankind,
And plays us on the chessboard of the years,
Cyphers and bishops, knights and kings alike.
By making reasons forcing us to move.
Ye knew it not, nor either did I know,
But it was in His plan to bring me here,
That those dreams that I had might be fulfilled.

It was God's doing, and 'tis marvellous.

DAN.—Brother, how came thy glory?

Did our great sin pile many woes on thee?

ZAPH.—Exposed in a slave market in this city,

I was disposed of to an officer
Of Pharaoh in high rank, and there advanced
To steward of his house; but evil came,
And I was thrust in prison, where I lay
For two full years where Simeon was awhile.
Then Pharaoh's chief butler, in disrepute,
Fell in the dungeon, and he dreamed a dream,
From which I prophesied his quick release,
Which happened to the tenor of my words.
After my two years were expired there,
God pictured unto Pharaoh in a dream
The seven years of plenty, and this famine;
And when he had convened the sorcerers.
And they could not reveal to him his dream,
The butler went to him and spake of me,
And I was brought into the senate chamber.
I recommended therefore to my lord
That every year a fifth part of the crop
Be stored away against a day of want;
And finding that I was of Abraham
(Famed as a scholar and astronomer),
I was advanced to what ye see to-day,
And since have served in that capacity.

JUD.—It seems that they who sin should bear the grief,

But here the sinned against bore punishment.

ASHER.—We heard of thee in Canaan, and his dreams.

But never thought it was our brother Joseph.

DAN.—Haran told us of thee. Him we sold thee to.

ZAPH.—When first ye came I thought to draw you all

Down to this land (for so I would fulfill
My dreams, as well as meet all, but I see
God shapes our destinies, and not ourselves),
Ere I unmasked myself, and to that end,
Held Simeon, and sent your money back—

SIM.—My lord, the steward said he had the money.

But here it is.

ZAPH. Had, and returned it, brother.
Keep it, 'tis thine. When Benjamin came down
I meant to hold him till my father came,
Feeling he would be drawn here for his child,
And so I privately conveyed my cup
To Benjamin's sack.

BENJ. There, brethren, there!
I was not guilty—now!

ZAPH.—Not guilty? no. I should have said so sooner,

But in the joy of greeting I forgot.
At leisure we will gather up the ends.
Now let us turn the shadows of the eve
Of father's life behind him, till his sun
Set unobscured. I will send with ye back
Wagons and asses, and ye all shall come,
With all your flocks and herds and household stuff,

And through the hard years I will nourish you.

JUD.—Nay, if thou wilt forgive, and leave us go.

That were enough, and we will live apart
And bless thee; while for this lad here
Who hath not wronged thee, and our father, they

May come and eat thy salt, for they are worthy.

ZAPH.—Foh! Ye've already eaten of my salt,
And in that eating brotherhood was sealed.

JUD.—Yet, though thou thus doth gracious-ly forgive,

It is not meet we hang upon thy sides,
When that perchance shall give thy lord offence

ZAPH.—Nay it shall please him. Shall he say me, Nay,

When I have made his land rich when 'tis poor,

When I have filled his purse, when I have bought

All flocks and herds for him, and will ail land
And every person ere the famine fail?

I make all Egypt his, its people his,
And him the richest monarch on the earth,
And shall he say me, Nay? Nay, ye shall come. [Knocking without.

Someone please open there. [Enter, Mess.

MES.—My lord, I am from Pharaoh.

ZAPH.—What says his majesty?

MES.—Pharaoh doth hear thy brethren are come down,

And sends them welcome, bidding them so-journ,

And eat his bread until the famine fail.

Now therefore he doth bid thee, mighty lord,
To give them asses, provender and money,

Victual and vestments, wagons and what not,
And tell them to repair to their own land,

And bring their families and flocks and herds,
And come and live with us; to not regard

Their household stuff, for that shall be supplied,

And wheresoever they shall please to dwell,
The land is their's throughout our utmost

borders,
And all the fat of Egypt shall be their's.

[Curtain.

SCENE III.—Plains of Canaan. Israel and tents; sons of Israel.

BENJ.—Father, we found our brother Joseph.

ISR.—Jest not at death; we know he is no more.

BENJ.—We thought so, but he lives, and I have seen him.

ISR.—Thou never didst see him.

BENJ.—O but I have.

He is the ruler of the land of Egypt.

JUD.—Father, 't is true; our brother is alive, And he it is who did foretell the want, And was made governor of all the land, And he hath sent for thee with many wains.

[Israel faints.]

Loosen his girdle and chafe at his wrists:

Bring thou the mules that he may see and know. [Exit, several. Isr. groans.]

Open thy eyes that yet shall see thy son.

ISR. (recovering) Who says Joseph lives?

JUD. I, father, I.

ISR.—Asher, is it true?

ASH. I saw him, father.

ISR.—Reubel?

REU. It is true.

ISR. Simeon, art thou safe?

SIM.—Safe, father; Joseph, too, is safe.

ISR. Dead?

SIM. Living.

ISR.—Is Rachel living? and is Dinah yet alive?

Have I been sleeping and dreamed they were dead?

JUD.—They have departed, but he is alive. Sorrows and age have dimmed thy vision, father,

But thou at living and he is alive, And thou shalt rest thee underneath his wing, For he is grown great, as his dreams foretold, And he shall hover us throughout the ill. See there the wagons he hath sent for us, Asses and raiment, silver and victuals, too.

ISR.—I see, it is enough, I do believe, And will go down and see him ere I die.

[Curtain.]

SCENE IV.—Plain on the frontier of Egypt. Enter, from one side, Israel borne on an ox-cart, with Leah beside him, and several Israelites near; from the opposite side Zaphnath-Paaneah enters in a chariot, attended.

ZAPH. (alighting) My father, father!

ISR. Joseph, is it thou?

Now heaven be blest that I have seen thy face, My son, my son. I am content to die, Now I have seen thee. It were best to die, Before another shadow cloud my life.

ZAPH.—Is not all well? No, sure thou shalt not die.

No further shadow shall fall on thy life; Art thou well, father? O how thou art changed!

ISR.—I have not been well till this hour, I think,

But now I am well. Yet—my child, my child! Thou wast a child when I last saw thy face, And now thou art a child no more.

ZAPH.

Nay, years are past Since thou didst send me tripping in gay coat A little journey, and the Spirit led Me on a great ways, through the length of years,

Ere I return and we are met again.

Thy pilgrimage is drawing to a close,

And I have journeyed up the hill of life

Further than Egypt is remote from Canaan.

[Other brethren enter. Leah kneels to Zaph.]

What! art thou kneeling to me, mother Leah?

Rise, and thrice welcome. I should seen thee sooner,

But that my eyes were so absorbed by him.

Welcome to all. My heart o'erflows in welcome And hides my tongue. Rise, mother Leah, rise.

LEAH—Nay, let me kneel: for, first, it is thy due;

And secondly, it so fulfills thy dream,

And I thus worship God who wrought His will So marvelously: and then third, I want

To plead with thee for my sons, and to thank Thee for them, for thou didst invite all here,

And in forgiving showed thy greatness great Beyond most kings. Now, therefore, hear my prayer:

Rise greater, nor require it of them,

Nor tell thy master till their babes be shamed.

[Ghost of Rachel and Dinah appear.]

RACH.—The dead wish justice done them.

ISR.—Merciful heavens! what can this portend?

Rachel, my wife!

RACH. Aye, my former love,

And not forgotten or forsaken now.

We spirit ones who have united you,

Come, just as thee moon bows down before my son,

To show you how his dreams have been fulfilled.

The justice that we crave is this: Because

My son's dream showed eleven stars and moon, When there were but ten brethren, these ten

thought

My sister was dishonored as a star,

When lo! before the powerful day arrives

Mine then unborn makes up eleven stars,

And I am gone, and Leah is the moon.

LEAH—Sister, forgive them.

RAC. Peace and love henceforth

Rule this united family.

DIN. Amen.

RACH.—Son, promise that my sister asked.

ZAPH.

I do.

BOTH GHO. (disappearing) Now I can rest. Ye are absolved from sin.

ISR.—Now hath my God showed me my wife again,

My daughter and my son, and so my life

Rounds into peace. And while we linger here
On sacred ground, my voice I will uplift
In blessing. Blessed be the God of Abraham,
Of Isaac and of wayward Israel,
Who hath fulfilled His promises to us.
Blessed be these my sons. Twelve sons had I,
But Reuben through his instability
Forfeits his birthright; Simeon and Levi
Because of cruel plots against their brother;
But Simeon expiated in the prison
His crime, and Levi not. This is my will:
Levi shall lose his share in Israel,
And for that he was cruel, he shall slay,
And his descendants; they shall be the priests
For Israel; and be without allot;
And what he forfeits shall be given Joseph,
Making him two shares, like he was firstborn:
Since Joseph is Egyptian, this shall be—
Ephraim and Manasseh are my sons,
And shall have equal parts in Israel.

Now son,
Direct us in the way that pleaseth thee.

ZAPH.—It is not well we break through etiquette

By coming in our wagons to the court,
So I would recommend that five of you,
And father, come with me, awhile the rest
Abide here with the goods and war fatigue
Till the allotment of our lands is made.

ISR.—Wise is thy word.

ZAPH.—Then pick me out the five.

ISR.—First, Asher, go, entreat those travellers

To rest with us, and eat. [Exit, Asher.

Judah I name,
Levi and Simeon and Dan and Gad.

ZAPH.—Then, brethren, when ye come before the king,

If he shall say, Of what trade may ye be?
Call not yourselves mere shepherd, but declare,
"Sir, we have dealt in cattle from our youth;"
For shepherds are abominated here,
While traders are respected.

[Re-enter, Asher, with Haran.

HAR.—Haran is thy Ishmaelitish slave,
Thou venerable man whose gracious deeds
Have moved the gods to lengthen out thy life.

ISR.—An old man's blessings rest upon thy head.

Wilt thou not eat with us?

HAR.—I'm sworn, my lord
To make all post to Egypt.

ISR.—There go we,
And wilt thou keep us company?

HAR.—My joy.

[Seeing Zaph., he stares blankly, then makes obeisance.]

DAN.—Dost thou remember, Haran, years ago,

Buying a youth from us in Canaan's hills,
Where we were tending flock?

HAR.—'T was someone else.

JUD.—Nay, it was thou.

HAR.—Till now I never saw thee.

ASH.—Aye, but it was thee bought the lad of us.

HAR.—Sirs, ye have called me here to Egypt's king
To bring false accusation on my life,
But it is false; I never bought your slave.

ZAPH.—Fear not, I came not here to try,
Nor will I punish thee for what thou didst,
But I know thou didst buy a slave of them.

HAR. (kneeling to Zaph.) O thou to whom
all secrets are revealed,
'T were vain to say thee nay; but pity me.

ZAPH.—Arise and fear not. With that slave
thou boughtest

For twenty silver pieces thou didst go
To Thebes, and for full eighty pieces sell
To Potaphar; who cast his slave in jail.
Now this slave could interpret dreams; and when

Pharaoh had vision of this famine, he
Showed it to Pharaoh, and was high advanced
As ruler of the land: that slave am I.
Nay, do not fear, no ill is our intent.

Then thou didst tell in Canaan this aged man
Of Egypt's bread, and his sons came to buy.
They are my brethren, and he is my father.

HAR.—Why, wonders are not ended.

ZAPH.—Come then with us,
Since thy way is to Egypt, and eat salt with me.

HAR. (kneeling) I am not worthy. But I
am thy slave. [Curtain.

SCENE V—Grounds near Pharaoh's capitol
in Thebes, showing interior of court room.
Enter, Asenath and sons, she with a cat in
her arms; seats herself to a side.

ASEN.—Run thither where your father lags
with them,
And bid him to come quick to me, alone.

[Exit. Man. and Eph. opposite place of entry.]

O Isis, have I giv'n thee such offence,
That thou must turn my husband into ill,
To punish me with rent domestic ties?
Take pity, Queen. When have I been unkind
To any creature loved of any god?
Then why should they be so unkind to me?
Ra, help me, with that kindness that I show
To this thy cat, and turn again his heart
To like fidelity she shows to me.

[Enter, on opposite edge of stage, Zaphnath-
Paaneah and company.

ZAPH.—Be seated, father.

ISR.—Now I see thee, son,
As thou wast in the days of long ago
In these thy children; but thy bearded face
A stranger's face is. Each of these appears
A separate Joseph; and full well I said
They shall be my sons, and have equal parts
In Israel. Now bring them to me,
That I may bless them.

[Zaph. brings Manasseh toward Israel's right hand, Ephraim toward his left.]

ZAPH. Here are the lads.

[Israel crosses arms, laying his right hand on Ephraim's head, and left on Manasseh's.]

Nay, let thy right hand rest upon this lad; He is the elder.

ISK. I know it, my son, I know it. But thou wert youngest, and art grown the greatest.

ASEN. (solus) Aye, all things int'rest him beyond his wife:

Gone for a week, he still must lag with them.

ISR.—Manasseh also shall become a people,

And also shall be great, yet of a truth,

The younger brother shall be greater still,

And his seed shall become a multitude.

The angel which redeemed me from all evil Bless, these two lads, and let my name be named

Upon them, and the name of Abraham And Isaac, and may they be prospered in the earth.

ASEN. (solus) Yet is he handsome. There the inward flaw

More shows, in that his outer form is good.

O Hathor, Hathor! patron of the wife,

Take pity, help. [Zaph. approaches.] At last he comes.

Why didst thou not come when I sent, my lord?

ZAPH.—I came soon as I could detach myself from them.

What wilt thou, love?

ASEN. Call me not that.

Go call her love who is thy love in truth,

But while thou findest pleasure from thy wife,

And art untrue to her, be true to truth

At least, and simulate no love to me.

ZAPH. Why, wife,

What doth this mean? Speak out the worst,

Nor talk so darkly. Doth a new tragedy

Begin, so soon as the old one hath an end?

ASEN. (producing roll) Speak that for me.

Art thou so innocent

This thy familiar locked up in thy desk

Is suddenly become a stranger to thee?

ZAPH.—This book, an old keepsake, is highly prized.

ASEN.—That's honest, if no more. Now read thy crime

Writ on the margin—praises of a half

The women in the city, and read this:

'Her hair is of a very dangerous auburn,

And is as flames coiled 'round her royal head

That catch light hearts, and set them all afire.'

What foreigner is this that fired thy heart,

Thy heart as light as tinder? 'Thou hast played it fine—

Away and making love. And here—read this:

'I love her with a more than woman's love.'

There is the secret record thou didst keep!

O is it not a beauteous thing, my lord?

Why smilest thou? Is this not in thy book

Thou 'st treasured and kept hid from me these years?

ZAPH.—Yea, but the hand is not mine. Now I'll pay

Thy jealous claim back with a usury.

Behold, thy writing.

ASEN. What! where hadst thou this?

ZAPH.—Thou well may'st ask. I had it of a slave.

Who told me thou didst talk of love to him,

Aud urge this book upon him.

ASEN. O 't is false!

In keeping with his other villainy.

I'll to the jail and make him swallow it.

ZAPH.—Thou dost acknowledge it.

ASEN.—I gave it him, while he was serving there,

For Coz. Zeleika; but, assaulting her,

He was thrust in the prison, and stole this.

I'm glad thou didst recover it of him.

ZAPH.—This is the man thou didst have commerce with!

ASEN.—I have been true to thee, and true to self

Before I saw thee, which is true to honor;

For without honor I'd dispise myself.

For my own foolish jealousy, my lord,

Thy charge I overlook. Let us forget.

But tell me, husband, how thou didst get this?

ZAPH.—I had it of him when I was in prison.

ASEN.—So will a fault seek out its natural father

Amidst a hundred innocents accused.

Thou wast in prison then—and for what crime?

ZAPH.—I was a slave cast there for discipline.

ASEN.—Gods! have I wed and had a child by one

Both slave and criminal?

ZAPH. My name was Joseph,

Ere Pharaoh bestowed my present name.

ASEN.—Why, then thou wert the one who wronged my cousin.

O that I came to this! O that I followed

My heart and not my eyes in marrying thee!

O that I darkly clasped thee to my heart

And clasped the blackness of the night in thee!

ZAPH.—'T is true I knew thee two years ere we wed,

And true my mistress would have been to me

A mistress in the truth, but, loving thee,

I fled, she kept my coat, and then, accusing

Me, I was cast in the prison, innocent;

For which cause God hath thus exalted me.

ASEN.—O villainly! not only so to wrong,

But to accuse the one that hath been wronged.

Till now I never had hard word with thee,

But thou hast wounded me, and I must cry.

Complete thy work, and slay me, hypocrite!

Deceiver of my cousin and myself,

Accuser of my cousin and myself,

And husband to how many the gods know.

O what a shame thou hast brought on our sons!

ZAPH.—Make no cry now, Asenath, while the king

And father are about, and I will clear
Shortly my skirts, for there Zeleika comes.
ASEN.—'Tis ever woman's part to hide the
fault

Of one she loves. Go to the king, be gay,
And I will sit here silent, bleeding here.
It is thy duty—go. [Zaph. crosses to Isr.
[Enter, Pharaoh, attended.

I ATT.—Son of the sun, thou art to thy
familiar

Perpetual marvel for thy gloriousness.
No spots are on thee, but all flecks that show
Are in thy helpers, who are merely men—
As spots that smut the sun are in the air.
Not on that glorious luminary's face.

2 ATT.—Well hast thou thus far trodden in
the steps

Of thy renowned father, who now art
A god of yonder kindly skies, still king.
Great were his works: he brooded on the egg
Of various learning, fathered what was wise,
Whipped in the disobedient, destroyed
The fierce Numidians, and tamed the wilds.

3 ATT.—His glory was in arms and tented
fields,

Nor wouldst thy glory pale if, with his rigor,
Thou lift thy recreant jailer's head from him.

ZAPH.—My lord, the mighty sun of earth.

PHA. Say on.

ZAPH.—According to thy word my kin are
come

To sojourn with me; here my father is,
And brethren; pray look graciously on them.

[Israelites and Haran kneel, but Israel, stand-
ing, blesses Pharaoh.]

ISR.—My good lord, there are many to
praise thee;

I have few words, but take an old man's blessing
For when my son was taken from my face,
And trouble for his loss bowed down my head,
Thou wast a father to him in this land.
May heaven do so to thee, and even more.

PHA. [Offended at his not bowing] How old
art thou?

ISR.—The days of the years of my pilgrim-
age are an hundred and thirty years. Few and
evil have the days of the years of my pilgrim-
age been, and have not attained unto the days
of the years of the life of my fathers in the
days of their pilgrimage.

PHA.—Succor thy kinsman with the best the
land

Of Egypt can afford; and after I
Have heard my jailer's cause, I will be here
To see you, and wilt welcome them at length.

[They pass on into the capitol, where the
jailer is arraigned in pantomime. Zaph. re-
turns to Asen. Enter, Zel., with servant.

ZEL.—Ho, cousin, for the trial! What! sit-
ting here

Diffusing tears? Are tears the burnisher
That makes thine eyes shine so, thou girl?

ZAPH. Lady,

She weeps for thee to know thou art polluted:

Nay, it were best to make no outcry here.
Long have I known how thou didst tempt thy
slave,

And then betray him, casting him in jail,
But she hath not till now, and weeps for thee;
Do thou therefore confess thy fault, profess
Friend-making penitence, and dry her eyes.

ZEL.—How knowest thou? all ladies have
their loves;

Look to thy own wife

ASEN. O thou slanderer!

ZEL.—Why didst thou put him up to blow
on me

Satan's hot breath of slander? O I hate thee.
And thou, whoapest woman's reputation,
Potaphar shall know of this, and Pharaoh too.
Thou'lt wish thou hadst not murdered wo-
man's honor

On th' word of a slave.

ZAPH. I'm Joseph, and I know.

ZEL.—Thou liest, villain.

ZAPH. Haran.

ZEL. Hast thou

Hired this merchant to accuse me too?

But I defy you. On my innocence
I stand, and say I hate, hate, hate you all,
And will have vengeance for your plotted lies.

[The angel Gabriel appears.

GAB.—Wilt thou deny before me?

ZEL. Merciful gods! [Falls dead.

GAB.—Sooner or later, evil mortals do
Confronts them past denial: see it so.
I, God's angel, who in prison taught him
Language,* rebuke thy jealousy of one
In this thing perfect. [Disappears.

Enter, Potaphar, Putlar and physician.

BUT.—Pharaoh hath sent me
With wine for her.

PHY. Alas! no wine

Will do her service now.

POT. Back, leech!

The gods wished her, and sent their messenger.
Did I not see him? Few are honored so.

But O 't was cruel. Lady, art thou gone?
Thou wert a weak craft for the world's high
seas,

Laden with such a generous soul, the weight
Thereof hath foundered thee, and now thy soul,
Breaking thy body, hath flowed out, is free.

Dear heart, my better half, I cannot live
Without thee. May good Pharaoh pardon me.

[Stabs himself.

Thus shall I join thee in the land of souls.

[Dies. Pharaoh, dismissing court, joins the
group, together with attendants.]

PLA.—He was a brave man and good officer,
And since he hath appealed to gods, they shall
Render him judgment, and not I myself.
But bear them tenderly away from here,
And let the priests go offer sacrifice,

*There is a legend that when Joseph was in
prison the angel Gabriel taught him the sev-
enty languages of earth.

While all prepare for worthy funeral.

ZAPH.—His last warfare is past, and he hath
peace.

No man will speak an ill word of the dead.
If they did ill, let it lie with them there,
And may the peace they find be without end.

PHA.—Ye who so speak with gods before
my face,

Doth it betoken ill?

ZAPH. No ill, but good, thy majesty.

[Haran and Jailer kneel to Zaph., grasping
his robe in supplication.]

This is my guest (indicating Har.) and he (in-
dicating Jail.) hath done me kindness.

Therefore, I pray thee, listen to my plea,
And let the jailer live, and go with him
When he shall make return.

PHA. Rise! be it so;
For I have seen thee talk with one the gods,
And I am told the lameness of thy sire
(’T is honor to have blemishes like that)
Comes from a wrestling with the like of him,
Whom he did overcome; and such as do
These wonders shall be my friends.

ZAPH. This thou hast seen
Is but a servant of the one we serve;

But Hermes knew our God, for he doth say,
“I am that which hath been, and which is,
and which shall be,
And none have lifted yet the veil which cov-
covers Me.”

PHA.—Whence comes that odor,
That scent of delicate perfume, and sweet?

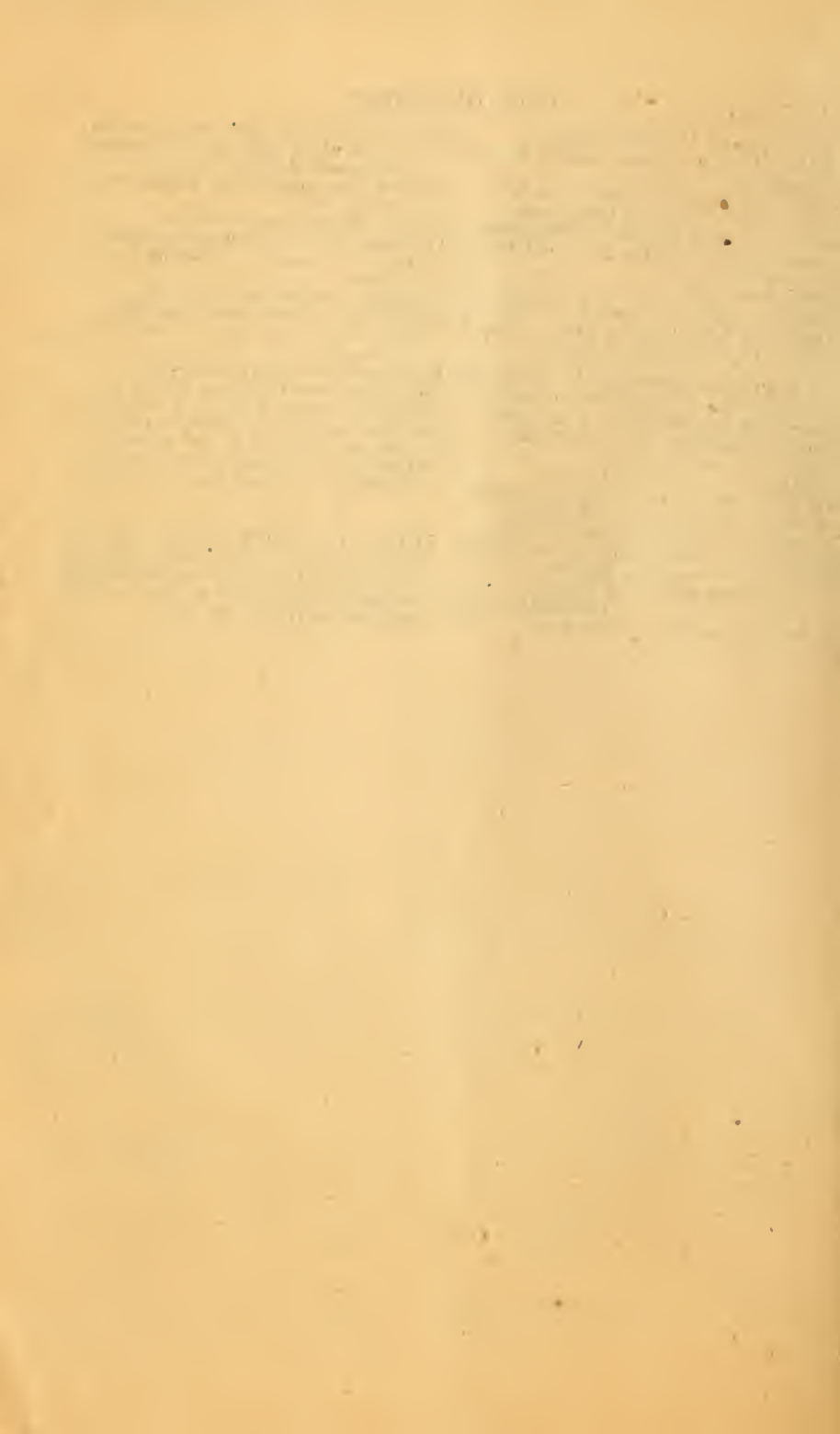
ZAPH.—Thy majesty, in passing they oft
leave

The scent of amaranth and asphodel,
Flowers that grow immortal in their land.

PHA.—Such wonders have not happened in
the world

In any nation of which I have heard,
And by the throne of Pharaoh I declare
Ye shall be honored by the songs of men
And have your deeds carved in the solid rock,
To speak to ages; and the land is your’s
The golden land of Ramses, what ye will.
[Exeunt, as a funeral cortege; curtain.

TRANSFORMATION.—On the white cur-
tain gradually, by magic lantern, appears
the ruins of Thebes as to-day existing, with
the moon rising behind a pillar, and owls
and bitterns crying in the dark.





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